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THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

COMPREHENDING

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES,

AND NUMEROUS WORKS,

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER;

A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE

AND CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY EMINENT PERSONS;

AND

Various Original Pieces of his Composition,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED:

THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN IN GREAT BRITAIN, FOR NEAR HALF A CENTURY DURING WHICH HE FLOURISHED.

BY JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

——— Quo fit ut *omnis*
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
Vita senis—— *Horat.*

A NEW EDITION.

COPIOUS NOTES AND BIOGRAPHICAL ILLUSTRATIONS,
BY MALONE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1821.

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On the 5th of March I wrote to him, requesting his counsel whether I should this spring come to London. I stated to him on the one hand some pecuniary embarrassments, which, together with my wife's situation at that time, made me hesitate; and, on the other, the pleasure and improvement which my annual visit to the metropolis always afforded me; and particularly mentioned a peculiar satisfaction which I experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter in St. Paul's cathedral; that to my fancy it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and that the strong devotion which I felt on that occasion diffused its influence on my mind through the rest of the year.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

[*Not dated, but written about the 15th of March.*]

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM ashamed to think that since I received your letter I have passed so many days without answering it.

"I think there is no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to vis[illegible] are, I think, not of sufficient strength to ans[illegible]jections. That you should delight to come [illegible] year to the fountain of intelligence and pleas[illegible] is very natural; but both information and pleasure must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unseasonable or unsuitable expense, must always end in pain; and pleasure, which must be enjoyed at the expense of another's pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in.

"What improvement you might gain by coming to London, you may easily supply or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

"I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs. Boswell's entreaties; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy such good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year, you must permit her now to keep you at home.

"Your last reason is so serious, that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember, that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison; and *simile non est idem;* if the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty because it was commanded; and you have no such command, therefore no such duty. It may be dan-

gerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions, from which, perhaps, no pious mind is wholly disengaged, of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading under the Eye of Omnipresence.

"To what degree fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator, and it is reasonable that all his gifts should be used to his glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in his worship; but they are to co-operate according to the will of him that gave them, according to the order which his wisdom has established. As ceremonies prudential or convenient are less obligatory than positive ordinances, as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration, so Fancy is always to act in subordination to Reason. We may take Fancy for a companion, but must follow Reason as our guide. We may allow Fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places; but Reason must always be heard, when she tells us, that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church we habitually recall to mind the duty of adoration, but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple; because we know, and ought to remember, that the Universal Lord is every where present; and that, therefore, to come to Jona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

"Thus I have answered your letter, and have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

"I think I shall be very diligent next week about

our travels, which I have too long neglected. I am, dear sir,

"Your most, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Compliments to Madam and Miss."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"THE lady who delivers this has a lawsuit, in which she desires to make use of your skill and eloquence, and she seems to think that she shall have something more of both for a recommendation from me; which, though I know how little you want any external incitement to your duty, I could not refuse her, because I know that at least it will not hurt her, to tell you that I wish her well. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 10, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, May 12, 1774.

"LORD HAILES has begged of me to offer you his best respects, and to transmit to you specimens of 'Annals of Scotland, from the Accession of Malcolm Kenmore to the Death of James V.' in drawing up which, his Lordship has been engaged for some time. His Lordship writes to me thus: 'If I could procure Dr. Johnson's criticisms, they would be of great use to me in the prosecution of my work, as they would be judicious and true. I have no right to ask that favour of him. If you could, it would highly oblige me.'

"Dr. Blair requests you may be assured that he

did not write to London what you said to him, and that neither by word nor letter has he made the least complaint of you; but on the contrary has a high respect for you, and loves you much more since he saw you in Scotland. It would both divert and please you to see his eagerness about this matter."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR, "Streatham, June 12, 1774.

"YESTERDAY I put the first sheets of the 'Journey to the Hebrides' to the press. I have endeavoured to do you some justice in the first paragraph. It will be one volume in octavo, not thick.

"It will be proper to make some presents in Scotland. You shall tell me to whom I shall give; and I have stipulated twenty-five for you to give in your own name. Some will take the present better from me, others better from you. In this, you who are to live in the place ought to direct. Consider it. Whatever you can get for my purpose send me; and make my compliments to your lady and both the young ones.

"I am, sir, your, &c.
"SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, June 24, 1774.

"YOU do not acknowledge the receipt of the various packets which I have sent to you. Neither can I prevail with you to *answer* my letters, though you honour me with *returns*. You have said nothing to me about poor Goldsmith,[1] nothing about Langton.

"I have received for you, from the Society for

1 Dr. Goldsmith died April 4, this year.

propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, the following Erse books:—'The New Testament;'—'Baxter's Call;'—'The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster;'—'The Mother's Catechism;'—'A Gaelick and English Vocabulary.'"[1]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I WISH you could have looked over my book before the printer, but it could not easily be. I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than in facts, the matter is not great, and the second edition will be mended, if any such there be. The press will go on slowly for a time, because I am going into Wales to-morrow.

"I should be very sorry if I appeared to treat such a character as Lord Hailes otherwise than with high respect. I return the sheets,[2] to which I have done what mischief I could; and finding it so little, thought not much of sending them. The narrative is clear, lively, and short.

"I have done worse to Lord Hailes than by neglecting his sheets: I have run him in debt. Dr. Horne, the President of Magdalen College in Oxford, wrote to me about three months ago, that he purposed to reprint Walton's Lives, and desired me to contribute to the work: my answer was, that Lord Hailes intended the same publication; and Dr. Horne has resigned it to him. His Lordship must now think seriously about it.

1 These books Dr. Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library.

2 On the cover enclosing them, Dr. Johnson wrote, "If my delay has given any reason for supposing that I have not a very deep sense of the honour done me by asking my judgement, I am very sorry."

"Of poor dear Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told, more than the papers have made publick. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?

"You may, if you please, put the inscription thus: '*Maria Scotorum Regina nata* 15—, *a suis in exilium acta* 15—, *ab hospitâ neci data* 15—.' You must find the years.

"Of your second daughter you certainly gave the account yourself, though you have forgotten it. While Mrs. Boswell is well, never doubt of a boy. Mrs. Thrale brought, I think, five girls running, but while I was with you she had a boy.

"I am obliged to you for all your pamphlets, and of the last I hope to make some use. I made some of the former. I am, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate servant,

"July 4, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"My compliments to all the three ladies."

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ. AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

"DEAR SIR,

"You have reason to reproach me that I have left your last letter so long unanswered, but I had nothing particular to say. Chambers, you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much further. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money and squandered it, by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man.

"I have just begun to print my Journey to the Hebrides, and am leaving the press to take another journey into Wales, whither Mr. Thrale is going, to take possession of, at least, five hundred a year, fallen to his lady. All at Streatham, that are alive, are well.

"I have never recovered from the last dreadful illness, but flatter myself that I grow gradually better; much, however, yet remains to mend. Κύριε ἐλέησον.

"If you have the Latin version of *Busy, curious, thirsty fly*, be so kind as to transcribe and send it; but you need not be in haste, for I shall be I know not where, for at least five weeks. I wrote the following tetrastick on poor Goldsmith:

"Τὸν τάφον ἐισοράας τον 'Ολιβαρίοιο, κονίην
 Ἄφροσι μὴ σεμνην, Ξεῖνε, πόδεσσι πάτει·
Οἷσι μέμηλε φύσις, μὲτρων χαρις, ἔργα παλαιῶν
 Κλαίετε ποιητην, ἱστόρικον, φυσικόν.

"Please to make my most respectful compliments to all the ladies, and remember me to young George and his sisters. I reckon George begins to shew a pair of heels.

"Do not be sullen now, but let me find a letter when I come back. I am, dear sir,

"Your affectionate, humble servant,

"July 5, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

"Llewenny, in Denbighshire, August 16, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,

"MR. THRALE's affairs have kept him here a great while, nor do I know exactly when we shall come hence. I have sent you a bill upon Mr. Strahan.

"I have made nothing of the Ipecacuanha, but have taken abundance of pills, and hope that they have done me good.

"Wales, so far as I have yet seen of it, is a very beautiful and rich country, all enclosed, and planted. Denbigh is not a mean town. Make my compliments to all my friends, and tell Frank I hope he remembers my advice. When his money is out, let him have more. I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Aug. 30, 1774.

"You have given me an inscription for a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, in which you, in a short and striking manner, point out her hard fate. But you will be pleased to keep in mind, that my picture is a representation of a particular scene in her history; her being forced to resign her crown, while she was imprisoned in the castle of Lochlevin. I must, therefore, beg that you will be kind enough to give me an inscription suited to that particular scene; or determine which of the two formerly transmitted to you is the best; and at any rate, favour me with an English translation. It will be doubly kind if you comply with my request speedily.

"Your critical notes on the specimen of Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' are excellent. I agreed with you on every one of them. He himself objected only to the alteration of *free* to *brave*, in the passage where he says that Edward 'departed with the glory due to the conqueror of a free people.' He says, to call the Scots brave would only add to the glory of their conqueror. You will make allowance for the national zeal of our annalist. I now send a few more

leaves of the Annals, which I hope you will peruse, and return with observations, as you did upon the former occasion. Lord Hailes writes to me thus: 'Mr. Boswell will be pleased to express the grateful sense which Sir David Dalrymple has of Dr. Johnson's attention to his little specimen. The further specimen will shew, that

'Even in an *Edward* he can see desert.'

"It gives me much pleasure to hear that a republication of Isaac Walton's Lives is intended. You have been in a mistake in thinking that Lord Hailes had it in view. I remember one morning, while he sat with you in my house, he said, that there should be a new edition of Walton's Lives; and you said that 'they should be be noted a little.' This was all that passed on that subject. You must, therefore, inform Dr. Horne, that he may resume his plan. I enclose a note concerning it; and if Dr. Horne will write to me, all the attention that I can give shall be cheerfully bestowed, upon what I think a pious work, the preservation and elucidation of Walton, by whose writings I have been most pleasingly edified."

* * * * * * * *

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 16, 1774.

"WALES has probably detained you longer than I supposed. You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scotland one year and Wales another. You must next go to Switzerland. Cambria will complain, if you do not honour her also with some remarks. And I find *concessere columnæ*, the booksellers expect another book. I am impatient to see your 'Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides.'

Might you not send me a copy by the post as soon as it is printed off?"

* * * * * * * *

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"YESTERDAY I returned from my Welsh journey. I was sorry to leave my book suspended so long; but having an opportunity of seeing, with so much convenience, a new part of the island, I could not reject it. I have been in five of the six counties of North Wales; and have seen St. Asaph and Bangor, the two seats of their Bishops; have been upon Penmanmaur and Snowden, and passed over into Anglesea. But Wales is so little different from England, that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.

"When I came home, I found several of your papers, with some pages of Lord Hailes's Annals, which I will consider. I am in haste to give you some account of myself, lest you should suspect me of negligence in the pressing business which I find recommended to my care, and which I knew nothing of till now, when all care is vain.[1]

"In the distribution of my books I purpose to follow your advice, adding such as shall occur to me. I am not pleased with your notes of remembrance added to your names, for I hope I shall not easily forget them.

"I have received four Erse books, without any direction, and suspect that they are intended for the Oxford library. If that is the intention, I think it will be proper to add the metrical psalms, and what-

1 I had written to him, to request his interposition in behalf of a convict, who I thought was very unjustly condemned.

ever else is printed in Erse, that the present may be complete. The donor's name should be told.

"I wish you could have read the book before it was printed, but our distance does not easily permit it.

"I am sorry Lord Hailes does not intend to publish Walton; I am afraid it will not be done so well, if it be done at all.

"I purpose now to drive the book forward. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and let me hear often from you. I am, dear sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"London, Octob. 1, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

This tour to Wales, which was made in company with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, though it no doubt contributed to his health and amusement, did not give an occasion to such a discursive exercise of his mind as our tour to the Hebrides. I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there. All that I heard him say of it was, that "instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones; and that one of the castles in Wales would contain all the castles that he had seen in Scotland."

Parliament having been dissolved, and his friend Mr. Thrale, who was a steady supporter of government, having again to encounter the storm of a contested election, he wrote a short political pamphlet, entitled "The Patriot,"* addressed to the electors of Great-Britain; a title which, to factious men, who consider a patriot only as an opposer of the measures of government, will appear strangely misapplied. It was, however, written with energetick vivacity; and, except those passages in which it endeavours to vindicate the glaring outrage of the House of Commons in the case of the Middlesex election, and to justify

the attempt to reduce our fellow-subjects in America to unconditional submission, it contained an admirable display of the properties of a real patriot, in the original and genuine sense;—a sincere, steady, rational, and unbiassed friend to the interests and prosperity of his King and country. It must be acknowledged, however, that both in this and his two former pamphlets, there was, amidst many powerful arguments, not only a considerable portion of sophistry, but a contemptuous ridicule of his opponents, which was very provoking.

"TO MR. PERKINS.[1]

"SIR,

"You may do me a very great favour. Mrs. Williams, a gentlewoman whom you may have seen at Mr. Thrale's, is a petitioner for Mr. Hetherington's charity: petitions are this day issued at Christ's Hospital.

"I am a bad manager of business in a crowd; and if I should send a mean man, he may be put away without his errand. I must therefore entreat that you will go, and ask for a petition for Anna Williams, whose paper of inquiries was delivered with answers at the counting-house of the hospital on

1 Mr. Perkins was for a number of years the worthy superintendant of Mr. Thrale's great brewery, and after his death became one of the proprietors of it; and now resides in Mr. Thrale's house in Southwark, which was the scene of so many literary meetings, and in which he continues the liberal hospitality for which it was eminent. Dr. Johnson esteemed him much. He hung up in the counting-house a fine proof of the admirable mezzotinto of Dr. Johnson, by Doughty; and when Mrs. Thrale asked him somewhat flippantly, "Why do you put him up in the counting-house?" He answered, "Because, madam, I wish to have one wise man there." "Sir (said Johnson), I thank you. It is a very handsome compliment, and I believe you speak sincerely."

Thursday the 20th. My servant will attend you thither, and bring the petition home when you have it.

"The petition, which they are to give us, is a form which they deliver to every petitioner, and which the petitioner is afterwards to fill up, and return to them again. This we must have, or we cannot proceed according to their directions. You need, I believe, only ask for a petition; if they inquire for whom you ask, you can tell them.

"I beg pardon for giving you this trouble; but it is a matter of great importance. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Octob. 25, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"THERE has appeared lately in the papers an account of a boat overset between Mull and Ulva, in which many passengers were lost, and among them Maclean of Col. We, you know, were once drowned;[1] I hope, therefore, that the story is either wantonly or erroneously told. Pray satisfy me by the next post.

"I have printed two hundred and forty pages. I am able to do nothing much worth doing to dear Lord Hailes's book. I will, however, send back the sheets; and hope, by degrees, to answer all your reasonable expectations.

"Mr. Thrale has happily surmounted a very violent and acrimonious opposition; but all joys have their abatement: Mrs. Thrale has fallen from her horse, and hurt herself very much. The rest of our

1 In the news-papers.

friends, I believe, are well. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am sir,

"Your most affectionate servant,

"London, Octob. 27, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter, which shews his tender concern for an amiable young gentleman to whom he had been very much obliged in the Hebrides, I have inserted according to its date, though before receiving it I had informed him of the melancholy event that the young Laird of Col was unfortunately drowned.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"LAST night I corrected the last page of our 'Journey to the Hebrides.' The printer has detained it all this time, for I had, before I went into Wales, written all except two sheets. 'The Patriot' was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday, and I have heard little of it. So vague are conjectures at a distance.[1] As soon as I can, I will take care that copies be sent to you, for I would wish that they might be given before they are bought; but I am afraid that Mr. Strahan will send to you and to the booksellers at the same time. Trade is as diligent as courtesy. I have mentioned all that you recommended. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell and the younglings. The club has, I think, not yet met.

"Tell me, and tell me honestly, what you think

1 Alluding to a passage in a letter of mine, where speaking of his "Journey to the Hebrides," I say "But has not 'The Patriot' been an interruption, by the time taken to write it, and the time luxuriously spent in listening to its applauses?"

and what others say of our travels. Shall we touch the continent?[1] I am, dear sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Nov. 26, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

In his manuscript diary of this year, there is the following entry:

"Nov. 27. Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly at 160 verses every Sunday. This day I began the Acts.

"In this week I read Virgil's Pastorals. I learned to repeat the Pollio and Gallus. I read carelessly the first Georgick."

Such evidences of his unceasing ardour, both for "divine and human lore," when advanced into his sixty-fifth year, and notwithstanding his many disturbances from disease, must make us at once honour his spirit, and lament that it should be so grievously clogged by its material tegument. It is remarkable, that he was very fond of the precision which calculation produces. Thus we find in one of his manuscript diaries, "12 pages in 4to Gr. Test. and 30 pages in Beza's folio, comprize the whole in 40 days."

"DR. JOHNSON TO JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE returned your play,[2] which you will find underscored with red, where there was a word which I did not like. The red will be washed off with a little water.

1 We had projected a voyage together up the Baltick, and talked of visiting some of the more northern regions.

2 "Cleonice."

"The plot is so well framed, the intricacy so artful, and the disentanglement so easy, the suspense so affecting, and the passionate parts so properly interposed, that I have no doubt of its success. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"December 19, 1774." "SAM. JOHNSON."

THE first effort of his pen in 1775, was, "Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox,"† in three volumes quarto. In his diary, January 2, I find this entry: "Wrote Charlotte's Proposals." But, indeed, the internal evidence would have been quite sufficient. Her claim to the favour of the publick was thus enforced:

"Most of the pieces, as they appeared singly, have been read with approbation, perhaps above their merits, but of no great advantage to the writer. She hopes, therefore, that she shall not be considered as too indulgent to vanity, or too studious of interest, if from that labour which has hitherto been chiefly gainful to others, she endeavours to obtain at last some profit to herself and her children. She cannot decently enforce her claim by the praise of her own performances: nor can she suppose, that, by the most artful and laboured address, any additional notice could be procured to a publication, of which HER MAJESTY has condescended to be the PATRONESS."

He this year also wrote the Preface to Baretti's "Easy Lessons in Italian and English."†

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOU never did ask for a book by the post till now, and I did not think on it. You see now it is done. I sent one to the King, and I hear he likes it.

"I shall send a parcel into Scotland for presents, and intend to give to many of my friends. In your catalogue you left out Lord Auchinleck.

"Let me know, as fast as you read it, how you like it; and let me know if any mistake is committed, or any thing important left out. I wish you could have seen the sheets. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to Veronica, and to all my friends. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"January 14, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 19, 1775.

"BE pleased to accept of my best thanks for your 'Journey to the Hebrides,' which came to me by last night's post. I did really ask the favour twice; but you have been even with me by granting it so speedily. Bis *dat qui cito dat.* Though ill of a bad cold, you kept me up the greatest part of the last night: for I did not stop till I had read every word of your book. I looked back to our first talking of a visit to the Hebrides, which was many years ago, when sitting by ourselves in the Mitre tavern, in London, I think about *witching time o'night:* and then exulted in contemplating our scheme fulfilled, and a *monumentum perenne* of it erected by your superiour abilities. I shall only say, that your book has afforded me a high gratification. I shall afterwards give you my thoughts on particular passages. In the mean time, I hasten to tell you of your having mistaken two names, which you will correct in London, as I shall do here, that the gentlemen who deserve the valuable compliments which you have paid them, may enjoy their honours. In page 106, for *Gordon*

read *Murchison;* and in page 357, for *Maclean* read *Macleod.*

* * * * * *

"But I am now to apply to you for immediate aid in my profession, which you have never refused to grant when I requested it. I enclose you a petition for Dr. Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, in which Sir John Dalrymple has exerted his talents, and which I am to answer as Counsel for the managers of the Royal Infirmary in that city. Mr. Jopp, the Provost, who delivered to you your freedom, is one of my clients, and, *as a citizen of Aberdeen,* you will support him.

"The fact is shortly this. In a translation of the charter of the Infirmary from Latin into English, made under the authority of the managers, the same phrase in the original is in one place rendered *Physician,* but when applied to Dr. Memis is rendered *Doctor of Medicine.* Dr. Memis complained of this before the translation was printed, but was not indulged with having it altered; and he has brought an action for damages, on account of a supposed injury, as if the designation given to him was an inferiour one, tending to make it be supposed he is *not a Physician,* and consequently to hurt his practice. My father has dismissed the action as groundless, and now he has appealed to the whole Court."[1]

1 In the Court of Session of Scotland an action is first tried by one of the Judges, who is called the Lord Ordinary; and if either party is dissatisfied, he may appeal to the whole Court, consisting of fifteen, the Lord President and fourteen other Judges, who have both in and out of Court the title of Lords, from the name of their estates; as, Lord Auchinleck, Lord Monboddo, &c.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SA

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I LONG to hear how you like the book; it is, I think, much liked here. But Macpherson is very furious; can you give me any more intelligence about him, or his Fingal? Do what you can, and do it quickly. Is Lord Hailes on our side?

"Pray let me know what I owed you when I left you, that I may send it to you.

"I am going to write about the Americans. If you have picked up any hints among your lawyers, who are great masters of the law of nations, or if your own mind suggest any thing, let me know. But mum, it is a secret.

"I will send your parcel of books as soon as I can; but I cannot do as I wish. However, you find every thing mentioned in the book which you recommended.

"Langton is here; we are all that ever we were. He is a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment.

"Poor Beauclerk is so ill, that his life is thought to be in danger. Lady Di nurses him with very great assiduity.

"Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor,[1] and seems to delight in his new character.

"This is all the news that I have; but as you love verses, I will send you a few which I made upon Inchkenneth;[2] but remember the condition, you shall not shew them, except to Lord Hailes, whom I

1 It should be recollected, that this fanciful description of his friend was given by Johnson after he himself had become a water-drinker.

2 See them in "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3d edit. p. 337.

love better than any man whom I know so little. If he asks you to transcribe them for him, you may do it; but I think he must promise not to let them be copied again, nor to shew them as mine.

"I have at last sent back Lord Hailes's sheets. I never think about returning them, because I alter nothing. You will see that I might as well have kept them. However, I am ashamed of my delay; and if I have the honour of receiving any more, promise punctually to return them by the next post. Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell, and to Miss Veronica. I am, dear sir,

"Yours most faithfully,

"Jan. 1, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."[1]

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 27, 1775.

* * * * * *

"You rate our lawyers here too high, when you call them great masters of the law of nations.

1 He now sent me a Latin inscription for my historical picture Mary Queen of Scots, and afterwards favoured me with an English translation. Mr. Alderman Boydell, that eminent Patron of the Arts, has subjoined them to the engraving from my picture.

"*Maria Scotorum Regina,*
Hominum seditiosorum
Contumeliis lassata,
Minis territa, clamoribus victa,
Libello, per quem
Regno cedit,
Lacrimans trepidansque
Nomen apponit.

"Mary Queen of Scots,
Harassed, terrified, and overpowered
By the insults, menaces,
And clamours
Of her rebellious subjects,
Sets her hand,
With tears and confusion,
To a resignation of the kingdom."

* * * * * *

"As for myself, I am ashamed to say I have read little and thought little on the subject of America. I will be much obliged to you, if you will direct me where I shall find the best information of what is to be said on both sides. It is a subject vast in its present extent and future consequences. The imperfect hints which now float in my mind, tend rather to the formation of an opinion that our government has been precipitant and severe in the resolutions taken against the Bostonians. Well do you know that I have no kindness for that race. But nations, or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgement, than general political speculations on the mutual rights of States and their provinces or colonies? Pray let me know immediately what to read, and I shall diligently endeavour to gather for you any thing that I can find. Is Burke's speech on American taxation published by himself? Is it authentick? I remember to have heard you say, that you had never considered East-Indian affairs: though, surely, they are of much importance to Great-Britain. Under the recollection of this, I shelter myself from the reproach of ignorance about the Americans. If you write upon the subject, I shall certainly understand it. But, since you seem to expect that I should know something of it, without your instruction, and that my own mind should suggest something, I trust you will put me in the way.

* * * * * *

"What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of Fingal and other poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?"

* * * * * *

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"You sent me a case to consider, in which I have no facts but what are against us, nor any principles on which to reason. It is vain to try to write thus without materials. The fact seems to be against you; at least I cannot know nor say any thing to the contrary. I am glad that you like the book so well. I hear no more of Macpherson. I shall long to know what Lord Hailes says of it. Lend it him privately. I shall send the parcel as soon as I can. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am, sir, &c.

"Jan. 28, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 2, 1775.

* * * * * *

"As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here, that before your book came out he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian's poems; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavourable, while I can only deny what is said, on

the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion.

"Lord Hailes writes to me (for we correspond more than we talk together), 'As to Fingal, I see a controversy arising, and purpose to keep out of its way. There is no doubt that I might mention some circumstances; but I do not choose to commit them to paper.'[1] What his opinion is, I do not know. He says, 'I am singularly obliged to Dr. Johnson for his accurate and useful criticisms. Had he given some strictures on the general plan of the work, it would have added much to his favours.' He is charmed with your verses on Inchkenneth, says they are very elegant, but bids me tell you he doubts whether

'*Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces*,'

be according to the rubrick: but that is your concern; for, you know, he is a Presbyterian."

* * * * * *

"TO DR. LAWRENCE.[2]

"Feb. 7, 1775.

"SIR,

"ONE of the Scotch physicians is now prosecuting a corporation that in some publick instrument have styled him *Doctor of Medicine* instead of *Physician*. Boswell desires, being advocate for the corporation, to

1 [His Lordship, notwithstanding his resolution, did commit his sentiments to paper, and in one of his notes affixed to his Collection of Old Scottish Poetry, he says, that "to doubt the authenticity of those poems is a refinement in Scepticism indeed." I. B.]

2 The learned and worthy Dr. Lawrence, whom Dr. Johnson respected and loved as his physician and friend.

know whether *Doctor of Medicine* is not a legitimate title, and whether it may be considered as a disadvantageous distinction. I am to write to-night; be pleased to tell me. I am, sir, your most, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"MY DEAR BOSWELL,

"I AM surprised that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other,[1] you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind; but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer,—that I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian—put an end to our correspondence.

"The state of the question is this. He, and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say, that he copied the poem from old manuscripts? His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shewn if they exist, but they were never shewn. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est ratio*. No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But, so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

1 My friend has, in this letter, relied upon my testimony, with a confidence, of which the ground has escaped my recollection.

"But whatever he has he never offered to shew. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood.

"Do not censure the expression; you know it to be true.

"Dr. Memis's question is so narrow as to allow no speculation; and I have no facts before me but those which his advocate has produced against you.

"I consulted this morning the President of the London College of Physicians, who says, that with us, *Doctor of Physick* (we do not say *Doctor of Medicine*) is the highest title that a practiser of physick can have; that *Doctor* implies not only *Physician*, but teacher of physick; that every *Doctor* is legally a *Physician*; but no man, not a *Doctor*, can *practise physick* but by *licence* particularly granted. The Doctorate is a licence of itself. It seems to us a very slender cause of prosecution.

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"I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to Madam and Veronica. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"February 7, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

What words were used by Mr. Macpherson in his letter to the venerable Sage, I have never heard; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the news-papers of the day, and has since been frequently re-published; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and

authenticated by a note in his own hand-writing, "*This, I think, is a true copy.*"[1]

"MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,

"I RECEIVED your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the publick, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather, "of something after death;" and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. Many instances of his re-

1 I have deposited it in the British Museum.

solution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the play-house at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick;" and being answered six-pence, "Why then, sir (said he), give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimick. Mr. Macpherson's menaces

made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland"* is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiment and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations, which many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together, probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr. Orme, the very able historian, agreed with me in this opinion, which he thus strongly expressed:—"There are in that book thoughts, which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean!"

That he was to some degree of excess a *true-born Englishman*, so as to have entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and the people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head, and not of the heart. He had no ill will to the Scotch; for, if he had been conscious of that, he never would have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence. His remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the Eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road; and he said it was "a map of the road" which he gave. His disbelief of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, a Highland bard, was confirmed in the course of his journey, by a very strict examination of the evidence offered for it; and although

their authenticity was made too much a national point by the Scotch, there were many respectable persons in that country, who did not concur in this; so that his judgement upon the question ought not to be decried, even by those who differ from him. As to myself, I can only say, upon a subject now become very uninteresting, that when the fragments of Highland poetry first came out, I was much pleased with their wild peculiarity, and was one of those who subscribed to enable their editor, Mr. Macpherson, then a young man, to make a search in the Highlands and Hebrides for a long poem in the Erse language, which was reported to be preserved somewhere in those regions. But when there came forth an Epick Poem in six books, with all the common circumstances of former compositions of that nature; and when, upon an attentive examination of it, there was found a perpetual recurrence of the same images which appear in the fragments; and when no ancient manuscript, to authenticate the work, was deposited in any publick library, though that was insisted on as a reasonable proof, *who* could forbear to doubt?

Johnson's grateful acknowledgements of kindness received in the course of this tour, completely refute the brutal reflections which have been thrown out against him, as if he had made an ungrateful return; and his delicacy in sparing in his book those who we find from his letters to Mrs. Thrale, were just objects of censure, is much to be admired. His candour and amiable disposition is conspicuous from his conduct, when informed by Mr. Macleod, of Rasay, that he had committed a mistake, which gave that gentleman some uneasiness. He wrote him a courteous and kind letter, and inserted in the news-papers an advertisement, correcting the mistake.[1]

1 See "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3d edit. p. 520.

The observations of my friend Mr. Dempster in a letter written to me, soon after he had read Dr. Johnson's book, are so just and liberal, that they cannot be too often repeated:

* * * * * *

"There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true; and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life than Col or Sir Allan.

"I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced; and I shall rank Ossian and his Fingals and Oscars, amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

"Upon the whole, the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The authour neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the history of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished, that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious regions, had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow University shew he has formed a very sound judgement. He understands our climate too; and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone, in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace."

* * * * * *

Mr. Knox, another native of Scotland, who has

since made the same tour, and published an account of it, is equally liberal. "I have read (says he) his book again and again, travelled with him from Berwick to Glenelg, through countries with which I am well acquainted; sailed with him from Glenelg to Rasay, Sky, Rum, Col, Mull, and Icolmkill, but have not been able to correct him in any matter of consequence. I have often admired the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he advances, respecting both the country and the people.

"The Doctor has every where delivered his sentiments with freedom, and in many instances with a seeming regard for the benefit of the inhabitants, and the ornament of the country. His remarks on the want of trees and hedges for shade, as well as for shelter to the cattle, are well founded, and merit the thanks, not the illiberal censure of the natives. He also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders, and explodes with great propriety the bad management of the grounds, and the neglect of timber in the Hebrides."

Having quoted Johnson's just compliments on the Rasay family, he says, "On the other hand, I found this family equally lavish in their encomiums upon the Doctor's conversation, and his subsequent civilities to a young gentleman of that country, who, upon waiting upon him at London, was well received, and experienced all the attention and regard that a warm friend could bestow. Mr. Macleod having also been in London, waited upon the Doctor, who provided a magnificent and expensive entertainment in honour of his old Hebridean acquaintance."

And, talking of the military road by Fort Augustus, he says, "By this road, though one of the most rugged in Great Britain, the celebrated Dr. Johnson passed from Inverness to the Hebride Isles. His

observations on the country and people are extremely correct, judicious, and instructive."[1]

Mr. Tytler, the acute and able vindicator of Mary Queen of Scots, in one of his letters to Mr. James Elphinstone, published in that gentleman's "Forty Years' Correspondence," says, "I read Dr. Johnson's Tour with very great pleasure. Some few errours he has fallen into, but of no great importance, and those are lost in the numberless beauties of his work.

"If I had leisure, I could perhaps point out the most exceptionable places; but at present I am in the country, and have not his book at hand. It is plain he meant to speak well of Scotland; and he has in my apprehension done us great honour in the most capital article, the character of the inhabitants."

His private letters to Mrs. Thrale, written during the course of his journey, which therefore may be supposed to convey his genuine feelings at the time, abound in such benignant sentiments towards the people who shewed him civilities, that no man whose temper is not very harsh and sour, can retain a doubt of the goodness of his heart.

It is painful to recollect with what rancour he was assailed by numbers of shallow irritable North Britons, on account of his supposed injurious treatment of their country and countrymen, in his "Journey." Had there been any just ground for such a charge, would the virtuous and candid Dempster have given his opinion of the book, in the terms in which I have quoted? Would the patriotick Knox[2] have

1 Page 103.

2 I observed with much regret, while the first edition of this work was passing through the press, (August 1790), that this ingenious gentleman was dead.

spoken of it as he has done? Would Mr. Tytler, surely

"—— a *Scot*, if ever *Scot* there were,"

have expressed himself thus? And let me add, that, citizen of the world, as I hold myself to be, I have that degree of predilection for my *natale solum*, nay, I have that just sense of the merit of an ancient nation, which has been ever renowned for its valour, which in former times maintained its independence against a powerful neighbour, and in modern times has been equally distinguished for its ingenuity and industry in civilized life, that I should have felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to it. Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking were not less known to those who lived with him, than his genius in his art is admired by the world, explained his conduct thus: "He was fond of discrimination, which he could not shew without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for shewing the acuteness of his judgement."

He expressed to his friend Mr. Windham of Norfolk, his wonder at the extreme jealousy of the Scotch, and their resentment at having their country described by him as it really was; when, to say that it was a country as good as England, would have been a gross falsehood. "None of us (said he) would be offended if a foreigner who has travelled here should say, that vines and olives don't grow in England." And as to

his prejudice against the Scotch, which I always ascribed to that nationality which he observed in *them*, he said to the same gentleman, "When I find a Scotchman, to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be as an Englishman to me." His intimacy with many gentlemen of Scotland, and his employing so many natives of that country as his amanuenses, prove that his prejudice was not virulent; and I have deposited in the British Museum, amongst other pieces of his writing, the following note in answer to one from me, asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there:—"Mr. Johnson does not see why Mr. Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre."

My much-valued friend Dr. Barnard, now Bishop of Killaloe, having once expressed to him an apprehension, that if he should visit Ireland he might treat the people of that country more unfavourably than he had done the Scotch, he answered, with strong pointed double-edged wit, "Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, sir; the Irish are a FAIR PEOPLE;—they never speak well of one another."

Johnson told me of an instance of Scottish nationality, which made a very unfavourable impression upon his mind. A Scotchman of some consideration in London, solicited him to recommend by the weight of his learned authority, to be master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman. Johnson was shocked at this unconscientious conduct.

All the miserable cavillings against his "Journey," in news-papers, magazines, and other fugitive publications, I can speak from certain knowledge, only furnished him with sport. At last there came out a scurrilous volume, larger than Johnson's own, filled with malignant abuse, under a name, real or fictitious, of some low man in an obscure corner of Scotland, though supposed to be the work of another Scotchman, who has found means to make himself well known both in Scotland and England. The effect which it had upon Johnson was, to produce this pleasant observation to Mr. Seward, to whom he lent the book: "This fellow must be a blockhead. They don't know how to go about their abuse. Who will read a five shilling book against me? No, sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, 18, 1775.

"You would have been very well pleased if you had dined with me to-day. I had for my guests, Macquharrie, young Maclean of Col, the successor of our friend, a very amiable man, though not marked with such active qualities as his brother; Mr. Maclean of Torloisk in Mull, a gentleman of Sir Allan's family; and two of the clan Grant; so that the Highland and Hebridean genius reigned. We had a great deal of conversation about you, and drank your health in a bumper. The toast was not proposed by me, which is a circumstance to be remarked, for I am now so connected with you, that any thing that I can say or do to your honour has not the value of an additional compliment. It is only giving you a guinea out of that treasure of admiration which already belongs to

you, and which is no hidden treasure; for I suppose my admiration of you is co-existent with the knowledge of my character.

"I find that the Highlanders and Hebrideans in general are much fonder of your 'Journey' than the low-country or *hither* Scots. One of the Grants said to-day, that he was sure you were a man of a good heart, and a candid man, and seemed to hope he should be able to convince you of the antiquity of a good proportion of the poems of Ossian. After all that has passed, I think the matter is capable of being proved to a certain degree. I am told that Macpherson got one old Erse MS. from Clanranald, for the restitution of which he executed a formal obligation; and it is affirmed, that the Gaelick (call it Erse or call it Irish), has been written in the Highlands and Hebrides for many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose, that such of the inhabitants as acquired any learning, possessed the art of writing as well as their Irish neighbours, and Celtick cousins; and the question is, can sufficient evidence be shewn of this?

"Those who are skilled in ancient writings can determine the age of MSS. or at least can ascertain the century in which they were written; and if men of veracity, who are so skilled, shall tell us that MSS. in the possession of families in the Highlands and isles are the works of a remote age, I think we should be convinced by their testimony.

"There is now come to this city, Ranald Macdonald from the Isle of Egg, who has several MSS. of Erse poetry, which he wishes to publish by subscription. I have engaged to take three copies of the book, the price of which is to be six shillings, as I would subscribe for all the Erse that can be printed, be it old or new, that the language may be preserved. This man says, that some of his manuscripts are ancient; and, to be sure, one of them which was

shewn to me does appear to have the duskyness of antiquity.

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"The inquiry is not yet quite hopeless, and I should think that the exact truth may be discovered, if proper means be used. I am, &c.

"James Boswell."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr. Strahan has at last promised to send two dozen to you. If they come, put the name of my friends into them; you may cut them out,[1] and paste them with a little starch in the book.

"You then are going wild about Ossian. Why do you think any part can be proved? The dusky manuscript of Egg is probably not fifty years old; if it be an hundred, it proves nothing. The tale of Clanranald is no proof. Has Clanranald told it? Can he prove it? There are, I believe, no Erse manuscripts. None of the old families had a single letter in Erse that we heard of. You say it is likely that they could write. The learned, if any learned there were, could; but knowing by that learning, some written language, in that language they wrote, as letters had never been applied to their own. If there are manuscripts, let them be shewn, with some proof that they are not forged for the occasion. You say many can remember parts of Ossian. I believe all those parts are versions of the English; at least there is no proof of their antiquity.

"Macpherson is said to have made some translations himself; and having taught a boy to write it,

1 From a list in his hand writing.

ordered him to say that he had learnt it of his grandmother. The boy, when he grew up, told the story. This Mrs. Williams heard at Mr. Strahan's table. Don't be credulous; you know how little a Highlander can be trusted. Macpherson is, so far as I know, very quiet. Is not that proof enough? Every thing is against him. No visible manuscript: no inscription in the language: no correspondence among friends: no transaction of business, of which a single scrap remains in the ancient families. Macpherson's pretence is, that the character was Saxon. If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer. As to Mr. Grant's information, I suppose he knows much less of the matter than ourselves.

"In the mean time, the bookseller says that the sale[1] is sufficiently quick. They printed four thousand. Correct your copy wherever it is wrong, and bring it up. Your friends will all be glad to see you. I think of going myself into the country about May.

"I am sorry that I have not managed to send the book sooner. I have left four for you, and do not restrict you absolutely to follow my directions in the distribution. You must use your own discretion.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell: I suppose she is now beginning to forgive me. I am, dear sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Feb. 25, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Tuesday, March 21, I arrived in London; and on repairing to Dr. Johnson's before dinner, found him in his study, sitting with Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, strongly resembling him in countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid

1 Of his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.'

manners. Johnson informed me, that though Mr. Beauclerk was in great pain, it was hoped he was not in danger, and that he now wished to consult Dr. Heberden, to try the effect of a "*new understanding*." Both at this interview, and in the evening at Mr. Thrale's, where he and Mr. Peter Garrick and I met again, he was vehement on the subject of the Ossian controversy; observing, "We do not know that there are any ancient Erse manuscripts; and we have no other reason to disbelieve that there are men with three heads, but that we do not know that there are any such men." He also was outrageous, upon his supposition that my countrymen "loved Scotland better than truth," saying, "All of them,—nay not all,—but *droves* of them, would come up, and attest any thing for the honour of Scotland." He also persevered in his wild allegation, that he questioned if there was a tree between Edinburgh and the English border older than himself. I assured him he was mistaken, and suggested that the proper punishment would be that he should receive a stripe at every tree above a hundred years old, that was found within that space. He laughed, and said, "I believe I might submit to it for a *baubee*."

The doubts which, in my correspondence with him, I had ventured to state as to the justice and wisdom of the conduct of Great Britain towards the American colonies, while I at the same time requested that he would enable me to inform myself upon that momentous subject, he had altogether disregarded; and had recently published a pamphlet, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny; an answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress.*"

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, I was told by Dr. John Campbell, that he had said of them, "Sir, they are a race of

convicts, and ought to be thankful for any thing we allow them short of hanging."

Of this performance I avoided to talk with him; for I had now formed a clear and settled opinion, that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother-country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent; and the extreme violence which it breathed, appeared to me so unsuitable to the mildness of a christian philosopher, and so directly opposite to the principles of peace which he had so beautifully recommended in his pamphlet respecting Falkland's Islands, that I was sorry to see him appear in so unfavourable a light. Besides, I could not perceive in it that ability of argument, or that felicity of expression, for which he was, upon other occasions, so eminent. Positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule, which he himself reprobated as a test of truth, were united in this rhapsody.

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt; and, indeed, he owned to me, that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told me, that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect: "That the Colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plow; we wait till he is an ox." He said, "They struck it out either critically as too ludicrous, or politically as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their business. If an architect says, I will build five stories, and the man who employs him says, I will have only three, the employer is to decide." "Yes, sir (said I), in ordinary cases. But should it be so when the architect gives his skill and labour *gratis*?"

Unfavourable as I am constrained to say my opinion of this pamphlet was, yet, since it was congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time, and as every thing relating to the writings of Dr. Johnson is of importance in literary history, I shall therefore insert some passages which were struck out, it does not appear why, either by himself or those who revised it. They appear printed in a few proof leaves of it in my possession, marked with corrections in his own hand-writing. I shall distinguish them by *Italicks*.

In the paragraph where he says, the Americans were incited to resistance by European intelligence from "men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves," there followed, —"*and made, by their selfishness, the enemies of their country*."

And the next paragraph ran thus: "On the original contrivers of mischief, *rather than on those whom they have deluded*, let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance."

The paragraph which came next was in these words: "*Unhappy is that country in which men can hope for advancement by favouring its enemies. The tranquillity of stable government is not always easily preserved against the machinations of single innovators; but what can be the hope of quiet, when factions hostile to the legislature can be openly formed and openly avowed?*"

After the paragraph which now concludes the pamphlet, there followed this, in which he certainly means the great Earl of Chatham, and glances at a certain popular Lord Chancellor.

"*If, by the fortune of war, they drive us utterly away, what they will do next can only be conjectured. If a new monarchy is erected, they will want a* King. *He who first takes into his hand the sceptre of America,*

should have a name of good omen. WILLIAM *has been known both a conqueror and deliverer; and perhaps England, however contemned, might yet supply them with* ANOTHER WILLIAM. *Whigs, indeed, are not willing to be governed; and it is possible that* KING WILLIAM *may be strongly inclined to guide their measures: but Whigs have been cheated like other mortals, and suffered their leader to become their tyrant, under the name of their* PROTECTOR. *What more they will receive from England, no man can tell. In their rudiments of empire they may want a* CHANCELLOR."

Then came this paragraph:

"*Their numbers are, at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival the ancient monarchies; but by Dr. Franklin's rule of progression, they will, in a century and a quarter, be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the Whigs of America are thus multiplied, let the Princes of the earth tremble in their palaces. If they should continue to double and to double, their own hemisphere would not contain them. But let not our boldest oppugners of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of Whiggism.*"

How it ended I know not, as it is cut off abruptly at the foot of the last of these proof pages.

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of "Political Tracts, by the Authour of the Rambler," with this motto:

> "*Fallitur egregio quisquis sub Principe credit*
> *Servitium; nunquam libertas gratior extat*
> *Quam sub Rege pio.*" CLAUDIANUS.

These pamphlets drew upon him numerous attacks. Against the common weapons of literary warfare he

was hardened; but there were two instances of animadversion which I communicated to him, and from what I could judge, both from his silence and his looks, appeared to me to impress him much.

One was, "A Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his late political Publications." It appeared previous to his "Taxation no Tyranny," and was written by Dr. Joseph Towers. In that performance, Dr. Johnson was treated with the respect due to so eminent a man, while his conduct as a political writer was boldly and pointedly arraigned, as inconsistent with the character of one, who, if he did employ his pen upon politicks, "it might reasonably be expected should distinguish himself, not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom."

It concluded thus: "I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the publick under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination, or energy of language, will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances, 'THE RAMBLER,' the pleasure which I have been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflection that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable of prostituting his talents in such productions as 'The False Alarm,' the 'Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands,' and 'The Patriot.'"

I am willing to do justice to the merit of Dr. Towers, of whom I will say, that although I abhor his Whiggish democratical notions and propensities, (for I will not call them principles), I esteem him as an ingenious, knowing, and very convivial man.

The other instance was a paragraph of a letter to me, from my old and most intimate friend the Reverend Mr. Temple, who wrote the character of Gray, which has had the honour to be adopted both by Mr. Mason and Dr. Johnson in their accounts of that poet. The words were, " How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend?"

However confident of the rectitude of his own mind, Johnson may have felt sincere uneasiness that his conduct should be erroneously imputed to unworthy motives, by good men; and that the influence of his valuable writings should on that account be in any degree obstructed or lessened.

He complained to a Right Honourable friend of distinguished talents and very elegant manners, with whom he maintained a long intimacy, and whose generosity towards him will afterwards appear, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend shewed him the impropriety of such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for his life; but he neither asked nor received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

On Friday, March 24, I met him at the LITERARY CLUB, where were Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Colman, Dr. Percy, Mr. Vesey, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Charles Fox. Before he came in, we talked of his " Journey to the Western Islands," and of his coming away,

"willing to believe the second sight,"[1] which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying, "He is only *willing* to believe: I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." "Are you? (said Colman), then cork it up."

I found his "Journey" the common topick of conversation in London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield's formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *Levées*, his Lordship addressed me, "We have all been reading your travels, Mr. Boswell." I answered, "I was but the humble attendant of Dr. Johnson." The Chief Justice replied, with that air and manner which none who ever saw and heard him can forget, "He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian."

Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. "The 'Tale of a Tub' is so much superiour to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the authour of it:[2] there is in it such a vigour

1 Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," edit. 1785, p. 256.

2 This doubt has been much agitated on both sides, I think without good reason. See Addison's "Freeholder," May 4, 1714; An Apology for the Tale of a Tub:—Dr. Hawkesworth's Preface to Swift's Works, and Swift's Letter to Tooke the Printer, and Tooke's Answer in that Collection:—Sheridan's Life of Swift;—Mr. Courtenay's note on p. 3 of his "Poetical Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson;" and Mr. Cooksey's "Essay on the Life and Character of John Lord Somers, Baron of Evesham."

Dr. Johnson here speaks only to the *internal evidence*. I take leave to differ from him, having a very high estimation of the

of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life." I wondered to hear him say of 'Gulliver's Travels,' "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest." I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of "the Man Mountain," particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his GOD, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed, that "Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put), 'The Plan of the Improvement of the English language,' and the last 'Drapier's Letter.'"

From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr. Thomas Sheridan.—JOHNSON. "Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its authour with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him, 'Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?' This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatick excellence,

powers of Dr. Swift. His "Sentiments of a Church-of-England-man;" his "Sermon on the Trinity," and other serious pieces, prove his learning as well as his acuteness in logick and metaphysicks; and his various compositions of a different cast exhibit not only wit, humour, and ridicule; but a knowledge "of nature, and art, and life:" a combination therefore of those powers, when (as the "Apology" says), "the authour was young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head," might surely produce "*The Tale of a Tub.*"

he should have requested one of the Universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin."

On Monday, March 27, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Strahan's. He told us, that he was engaged to go that evening to Mrs. Abington's benefit. "She was visiting some ladies whom I was visiting, and begged that I would come to her benefit. I told her I could not hear: but she insisted so much on my coming, that it would have been brutal to have refused her." This was a speech quite characteristical. He loved to bring forward his having been in the gay circles of life; and he was, perhaps, a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and fashionable actress. He told us, the play was to be "The Hypocrite," altered from Cibber's "Nonjuror," so as to satirize the Methodists. "I do not think (said he), the character of the Hypocrite justly applicable to the Methodists, but it was very applicable to the Nonjurors. I once said to Dr. Madan, a clergyman of Ireland, who was a great Whig, that perhaps a Nonjuror would have been less criminal in taking the oaths imposed by the ruling power, than refusing them; because refusing them, necessarily laid him under almost an irresistible temptation to be more criminal; for, a man *must* live, and if he precludes himself from the support furnished by the establishment, will probably be reduced to very wicked shifts to maintain himself."[1] BOSWELL. "I should think,

1 This was not merely a cursory remark; for in his Life of Fenton he observes, "With many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate [about the beginning of this century], consulted conscience well or ill informed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the government; and refusing to qualify himself for publick employment, by taking the oaths re-

sir, that a man who took the oaths contrary to his principles, was a determined wicked man, because he was sure he was committing perjury, whereas a Nonjuror might be insensibly led to do what was wrong, without being so directly conscious of it." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a man who goes to bed to his patron's wife is pretty sure that he is committing wickedness." BOSWELL. "Did the nonjuring clergymen do so, sir?" JOHNSON. "I am afraid many of them did."

I was startled at this argument, and could by no means think it convincing. Had not his own father complied with the requisition of government, (as to which he once observed to me, when I pressed him upon it, "*That*, sir, he was to settle with himself,") he would probably have thought more unfavourably of a Jacobite who took the oaths:

"——— had he not resembled
My father as he *swore*——."

Mr. Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London, in order to have a chance for rising

quired, left the University without a degree." This conduct Johnson calls "perverseness of integrity."

The question concerning the morality of taking oaths, of whatever kind, imposed by the prevailing power at the time, rather than to be excluded from all consequence, or even any considerable usefulness in society, has been agitated with all the acuteness of casuistry. It is related, that he who devised the oath of abjuration profligately boasted, that he had framed a test which should "damn one half of the nation, and starve the other." Upon minds not exalted to inflexible rectitude, or minds in which zeal for a party is predominant to excess, taking that oath against conviction, may have been palliated under the plea of necessity, or ventured upon in heat, as upon the whole producing more good than evil.

At a county election in Scotland, many years ago, when there

into eminence; and, observing that many men were kept back from trying their fortunes there, because they were born to a competency, said, "Small certainties are the bane of men of talents;" which Johnson confirmed. Mr. Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him; "There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." "The more one thinks of this (said Strahan), the juster it will appear."

Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson's recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, "Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I'll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down."

I followed him into the court-yard, behind Mr. Strahan's house; and there I had a proof of what I had heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. "Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that. I speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can."

"Well, my boy, how do you go on?"—"Pretty well, sir; but they are afraid I a'nt strong enough for some parts of the business." JOHNSON. "Why I shall be sorry for it; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear,—take all the pains

was a warm contest between the friends of the Hanoverian succession, and those against it, the oath of abjuration having been demanded, the freeholders upon one side rose to go away. Upon which a very sanguine gentleman, one of their number, ran to the door to stop them, calling out with much earnestness, "Stay, stay, my friends, and let us swear the rogues out of it!"

you can; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea."

Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevolence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe, could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

I met him at Drury-lane play-house in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs. Abington's request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit; and having secured forty places in the front boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me; and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite a cloud, amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts, and a farce of two. He said very little; but after the prologue to "Bon Ton" had been spoken, which he could hear pretty well from the more slow and distinct utterance, he talked on prologue-writing, and observed, "Dryden has written prologues superiour to any that David Garrick has written; but David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done. It is wonderful that he has been able to write such variety of them."

At Mr. Beauclerk's, where I supped, was Mr. Garrick, whom I made happy with Johnson's praise of his prologues; and I suppose, in gratitude to him, he took up one of his favourite topicks, the nationality of the Scotch, which he maintained in a pleasant manner, with the aid of a little poetical fiction. "Come, come, don't deny it: they are really national. Why, now, the Adams are as liberal-minded men as any in the world: but, I don't know how it is, all

their workmen are Scotch. You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality: but so it happens, that you employ the only Scotch shoe-black in London." He imitated the manner of his old master with ludicrous exaggeration; repeating, with pauses and half-whistlings interjected,

> "*Os homini sublime dedit,—cælumque tueri*
> *Jussit,—et erectos ad sidera—tollere vultus.*"

looking downwards all the time, and, while pronouncing the four last words, absolutely touching the ground with a kind of contorted gesticulation.

Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very exactly; for that great actor, with his distinguished powers of expression which were so universally admired, possessed also an admirable talent of mimickry. He was always jealous that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, "Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 'tis a futile fellow;" which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive;[1] and I wish it could be preserved as

1 My noble friend Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, that, "Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his *bow-wow way.*" The sayings themselves are generally of sterling merit; but, doubtless, his *manner* was an addition to their effect; and therefore should be attended to as much as may be. It is necessary, however, to guard those who were not acquainted with him against overcharged imitations or caricatures of his manner, which are frequently attempted, and many of which are second-hand copies from the late Mr. Henderson the actor, who, though a good mimick of some persons, did not represent Johnson correctly.

musick is written, according to the very ingenious method of Mr. Steele,[1] who has shewn how the recitation of Mr. Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.[2]

Next day I dined with Johnson at Mr. Thrale's. He attacked Gray, calling him "a dull fellow." Boswell. "I understand he was reserved, and might appear dull in company; but surely he was not dull in poetry." Johnson. "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull every where. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him GREAT. He was a mechanical poet." He then repeated some ludicrous lines, which have escaped my memory, and said, "Is not that GREAT, like his Odes?" Mrs. Thrale maintained that his Odes were melodious; upon which he exclaimed,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof;"—

I added, in a solemn tone,

"The winding-sheet of Edward's race.

There is a good line."—"Ay (said he), and the next line is a good one," (pronouncing it contemptuously);

"Give ample verge and room enough.—"

"No, sir, there are but two good stanzas in Gray's

1 See "*Prosodia Rationalis*; or, an Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols." London, 1779.

2 I use the phrase *in score*, as Dr. Johnson has explained it in his Dictionary. "*A song in* Score, the words with the musical notes of a song annexed." But I understand that in scientifick propriety it means all the parts of a musical composition noted down in the characters by which it is exhibited to the eye of the skilful.

[It was *declamation* that Steele pretended to reduce to notation by new characters. This he called the *melody* of speech, not the *harmony*, which the term in *score* implies. B.]

poetry, which are in his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.'" He then repeated the stanza,

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey," &c.

mistaking one word; for instead of *precincts* he said *confines*. He added, "The other stanza I forget."

A young lady who had married a man much her inferiour in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation; and, while I recapitulate the debate, and recollect what has since happened, I cannot but be struck in a manner that delicacy forbids me to express. While I contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs. Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, "making the best of a bad bargain." JOHNSON. "Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank, I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself had chosen; and would not put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, madam, that it is our duty to maintain the subordination of civilized society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank, it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion."

After frequently considering this subject, I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority, and illustrated by the wisdom, of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of Society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak, and contemptible, and unworthy, in a parent to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And

let it be considered, that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus, to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be a value in that distinction, it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shewn to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages, will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed.

Lord Chesterfield's letters being mentioned, Johnson said, "It was not to be wondered at that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virûm volitare per ora.*"

On Friday, March 31, I supped with him and some friends at a tavern. One of the company attempted, with too much forwardness, to rally him on his late appearance at the theatre; but had reason to repent of his temerity. "Why, sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?" JOHNSON. "No, sir." "Did you hear?" JOHNSON. "No, sir." "Why then, sir, did you go?" JOHNSON. "Because, sir, she is a favourite of the publick; and when the publick cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too."

Next morning I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of his particularities, which her Ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the Club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which

he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. "O, sir (said I), I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put into your pocket at the Club." JOHNSON. "I have a great love for them." BOSWELL. "And pray, sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next?" JOHNSON. "Let them dry, sir." BOSWELL. "And what next?" JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, you shall know their fate no further." BOSWELL. "Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said (assuming a mock solemnity), he scraped them, and let them dry, but what he did with them next, he never could be prevailed upon to tell." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, you should say it more emphatically:—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell."

He had this morning received his Diploma as Doctor of Laws from the University of Oxford. He did not vaunt of his new dignity, but I understood he was highly pleased with it. I shall here insert the progress and completion of that high academical honour, in the same manner as I have traced his obtaining that of Master of Arts.

To the Reverend Dr. FOTHERGILL, *Vice-Chancellor of the University of* Oxford, *to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation.*

"MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,

"THE honour of the degree of M. A. by diploma, formerly conferred upon MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in consequence of his having eminently distinguished

himself by the publication of a séries of Essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality has been maintained and recommended by the strongest powers of argument and elegance of language, reflected an equal degree of lustre upon the University itself.

"The many learned labours which have since that time employed the attention and displayed the abilities of that great man, so much to the advancement of literature and the benefit of the community, render him worthy of more distinguished honours in the Republick of letters: and I persuade myself, that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in Convocation to confer on him the degree of Doctor in Civil Law by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am,

"Mr. Vice-Chancellor and Gentlemen,

"Your affectionate friend and servant,

"North."[1]

"Downing-street,
March 23, 1775."

Diploma.

"*CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos presentes Literæ pervenerint, salutem in Domino Sempiternam.*

"Sciatis, *virum illustrem,* Samuelem Johnson, *in omni humaniorum literarum genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum comprehensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium mores formandos summâ verborum elegantiâ ac sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim inclaruisse, ut dignus videretur cui ab*

1 Extracted from the Convocation Register, Oxford.

Academiâ suâ eximia quædam laudis præmia deferentur, quique venerabilem Magistrorum Ordinem summâ cum dignitate cooptaretur:

"*Cùm verò eundem clarissimum virum tot posteà tantique labores, in patriâ præsertim linguâ ornandâ et stabiliendâ feliciter impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in Literarum Republicâ* PRINCEPS *jam et* PRIMARIUS *jure habeatur; Nos,* CANCELLARIUS, *Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis, quò talis viri merita pari honoris remuneratione exæquentur, et perpetuum suæ simul laudis, nostræque ergà literas propensissimæ voluntatis extet monumentum, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum et Magistrorum Regentium, et non Regentium, prædictum* SAMUELEM JOHNSON *Doctorem in Jure Civili renunciavimus et constituimus, eumque virtute præsentis Diplomatis singulis juribus, privilegiis et honoribus, ad istum gradum quàquà pertinentibus, frui et gaudere jussimus. In cujus rei testimonium commune Universitatis Oxoniensis sigillum præsentibus apponi fecimus.*

"*Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die tricesimo Mensis Martii, Anno Domini Millesimo septingentesimo, septuagesimo quinto.*"[1]

1 The original is in my possession. He shewed me the Diploma, and allowed me to read it, but would not consent to my taking a copy of it, fearing perhaps that I should blaze it abroad in his life-time. His objection to this appears from his 99th letter to Mrs. Thrale, whom in that letter he thus scolds for the grossness of her flattery of him.—"The other Oxford news is, that they have sent me a degree of Doctor of Laws, with such praises in the Diploma as perhaps ought to make me ashamed: they are very like your praises. I wonder whether I shall ever shew it to you."

It is remarkable that he never, so far as I know, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr.* Johnson, as appears from many of his cards or notes to myself, and I have seen many from him to other persons, in which he uniformly takes that designation.—I once observed on his table a letter directed to him with the addition of *Esquire*, and objected to it as being a designation in-

"*Viro Reverendo* THOMÆ FOTHERGILL, *S. T. P. Universitatis Oxoniensis Vice-Cancellario.*

"*S. P. D.*

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"*MULTIS non est opus, ut testimonium quo, te præside, Oxonienses nomen meum posteris commendârunt, quali animo acceperim compertum faciam. Nemo sibi placens non lætatur; nemo sibi non placet, qui vobis, literarum arbitris, placere potuit. Hoc tamen habet incommodi tantum beneficium, quod mihi nunquam posthâc sine vestræ famæ detrimento vel labi liceat vel cessare; semperque sit timendum, ne quod mihi tam eximiæ laudi est, vobis aliquando fiat opprobrio. Vale.*"[1]

"7. *Id. Apr.* 1775."

He revised some sheets of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland," and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his Lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that he did not spoil his manuscript.—I observed to him that there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON. "Why should you write down *my* sayings?" BOSWELL. "I write them when they are good." JOHNSON. "Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of any one else that are good." But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

feriour to that of Doctor; but he checked me, and seemed pleased with it, because, as I conjectured, he liked to be sometimes taken out of the class of literary men, and to be merely *genteel*,—*un gentilhomme comme un autre.*

1 "The original is in the hands of Dr. Fothergill, then Vice-Chancellor, who made this transcript." T. WARTON.

I visited him by appointment in the evening, and we drank tea with Mrs. Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation. But I found he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, he is not a distinct relater; and I should say, he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding." BOSWELL. "But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution, in penetrating into distant regions?" JOHNSON. "That, sir, is not to the present purpose: We are talking of sense. A fighting cock has a nobleness of resolution."

Next day, Sunday, April 2, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's. We talked of Pope. JOHNSON. "He wrote his 'Dunciad' for fame. That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."

The "Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion," in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said "They are Colman's best things." Upon its being observed that it was believed these Odes were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly;—JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, how can two people make an Ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other." I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting

together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other. "I'll kill the King." JOHNSON. "The first of these Odes is the best; but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing." BOSWELL. "Surely, sir, Mr. Mason's 'Elfrida' is a fine Poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it." JOHNSON. "There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner."

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have, in a former part of this work, expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr. Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His "Elfrida" is exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment; and his "Caractacus" is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems, which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting his works: that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images, and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy, in short all the lesser instruments: but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestick organ?

His "Taxation no Tyranny" being mentioned, he said, "I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the re-action; I never think I have hit hard, unless it re-bounds." BOSWELL. "I don't know, sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small arms in every news-paper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, might, I think, satisfy you. But, sir, you'll never make out this match, of which we have talked, with a certain political lady, since you are so severe against her principles." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, I have the better chance for that. She is

like the Amazons of old; she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her." BOSWELL. "Yes, sir, you have made her ridiculous." JOHNSON. "That was already done, sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous, is like blacking the chimney."

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England, next to Lord Mansfield. "Ay, sir (said he), the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no farther:

'The force of Nature could no farther go.'"

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her Vase at Batheaston villa, near Bath, in competition for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap: "*Bouts rimés* (said he) is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now;* I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady." I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the Vase. JOHNSON. "He was a blockhead for his pains." BOSWELL. "The Duchess of Northumberland wrote." JOHNSON. "Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases: nobody will say any thing to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw ******'s verses in his face."

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet-street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, Fleet-street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing-cross."

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience, when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at

ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined. "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country-house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here, sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstances in the business to which he had been used, was a relief from idleness."

On Wednesday, April 5, I dined with him at Messieurs Dilly's, with Mr. John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker, Mr. Langton, Mr. Miller (now Sir John), and Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Mr. Dilly's table, having seen him at Mr. Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr. Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published "A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland," a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault:—that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of publick speaking.—Johnson. "We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in publick. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into Parliament, and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it, and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten." This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well if he had

tried; whereas, if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. "Why then (I asked), is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in publick?" JOHNSON. "Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in publick than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say, (laughing). Whereas, sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other."

He observed, that "the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into Parliament;" adding, that "if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported." LANGTON. "Would not that, sir, be checking the freedom of election?" JOHNSON. "Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest; of the permanent property of the country."

On Thursday, April 6, I dined with him at Mr. Thomas Davies's, with Mr. Hicky the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr. Moody, the player.

Dr. Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. "It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and the witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation: and he had but half to furnish; for one half of what he said was oaths." He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that the "Careless Husband" was not written by himself. Davies said, he was the first dramatick writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted his observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES, (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance). "I mean

genteel moral characters." "I think (said Hicky), gentility and morality are inseparable." BOSWELL. "By no means, sir. The genteelest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteelly: a man may debauch his friend's wife genteelly: he may cheat at cards genteelly." HICKY. "I do not think *that* is genteel." BOSWELL. "Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel." JOHNSON. "You are meaning two different things. One means exteriour grace; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exteriour grace. Lovelace, in 'Clarissa,' is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t'other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteelest men that ever lived." Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON, (taking fire at any attack upon that Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality). "Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best King we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good King, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholicks. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholicks, had the merit of maintaining our religion, at the expense of submitting ourselves to the government of King William, for it could not be done otherwise;

—to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed. No; Charles the Second was not such a man as ———, (naming another King). He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France: but he did not betray those over whom he ruled: He did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing; and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor." He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected, in an Irish tone, and with a comick look, "Ah! poor George the Second."

I mentioned that Dr. Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to London, principally to see Dr. Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES. "Why, you know, sir, there came a man from Spain to see Livy;[1] and Corelli came to England to see Purcell,[2] and, when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy." JOHNSON. "I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off." This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking: he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency, when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him: "That having seen such a man, was a thing to talk of a century hence,"—as if he could live so long.

1 Plin. Epist. Lib. ii. Ep. 3.

2 [Mr. Davies was here mistaken. Corelli never was in England. B.]

We got into an argument whether the Judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might, "For why (he urged) should not Judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less?" I said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the publick. JOHNSON. "No Judge, sir, can give his whole attention to his office; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, to his own advantage, in the most profitable manner." "Then, sir (said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatick), he may become an insurer; and when he is going to the bench, he may be stopped,—'Your Lordship cannot go yet; here is a bunch of invoices: several ships are about to sail.'" JOHNSON. "Sir, you may as well say a Judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, 'Your Lordship's house is on fire;' and so, instead of minding the business of his Court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every Judge who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle; and in the land itself undoubtedly his steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A Judge may be a farmer; but he is not to geld his own pigs. A Judge may play a little at cards for his amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or chuck farthing in the Piazza. No, sir; there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a Judge, upon the condition of being totally a Judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time; a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical.—I once

wrote for a magazine: I made a calculation, that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should, in ten years, write nine volumes in folio, of an ordinary size and print." BOSWELL. "Such as Carte's History?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir. When a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.[1] The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book."

I argued warmly against the Judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect Judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office. JOHNSON. "Hale, sir, attended to other things beside law: he left a great estate." BOSWELL. "That was, because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part."

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something on our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back, to encourage him. Beauclerk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said, "that he could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies."

We spoke of Rolt, to whose Dictionary of Commerce, Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. JOHNSON. "Old Gardner the bookseller employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany, called 'The Universal Visitor.' There was a formal written contract, which Allen the printer saw. Gardner thought as you do of the Judge. They were bound to write nothing else; they were to have, I think, a third of the profits of his sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years. I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow, in the cause about Lite-

1 Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge, and teeming with imagery; but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.

rary Property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of booksellers towards poor authours!"[1] (smiling). Davies, zealous for the honour of *the Trade,* said, Gardner was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON. "Nay, sir; he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers' company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copyright, and was a *bibliopole,* sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in 'The Universal Visitor,' for poor Smart, while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in 'The Universal Visitor' no longer."

Friday, April 7, I dined with him at a Tavern, with a numerous company. JOHNSON. "I have been reading 'Twiss's Travels in Spain,' which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keysler or Blainville: nay, as Addison's,[2] if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone's, but they are better than Pococke's. I

1 There has probably been some mistake as to the terms of this supposed extraordinary contract, the recital of which from hearsay afforded Johnson so much play for his sportive acuteness. Or if it was worded as he supposed, it is so strange that I should conclude it was a joke. Mr. Gardner, I am assured, was a worthy and liberal man.

2 [Speaking of Addison's *Remarks on Italy* in "The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," (p. 320, 3d edit.) he says, "it is a tedious book, and if it were not attached to Addison's previous reputation, one would not think much of it. Had he written nothing else, his name would not have lived. Addison does not seem to have gone deep into Italian literature: he shews nothing of it in his subsequent writings.—He shews a great deal of French learning." M.]

have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet; but I have read in them where the pages are open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages.—It would seem (he added), that Addison had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his writings. The only instance that I recollect is his quoting '*Stavo bene; per star meglio, sto qui.*'"[1]

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his classical remarks from Leandro Alberti. Mr. Beauclerk said, "It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian authour." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, all who go to look for what the Classicks have said of Italy, must find the same passages;[2] and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning, to collect all that the Roman authours have said of their country."

Ossian being mentioned;—JOHNSON. "Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties, where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could

1 [Addison, however, does not mention where this celebrated Epitaph, which has eluded a very diligent inquiry, is found. M.]

2 [" But if you find the same *applications* in another book, then Addison's learning falls to the ground." Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, *ut supra*. M.]

write." BEAUCLERK. "The ballad of Lilliburlero was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the Revolution. Yet I question whether any body can repeat it now; which shews how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition."

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the wolf in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts; and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, "Pennant tells of Bears."— [What he added, I have forgotten.] They went on, which he being dull of hearing, did not perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk; so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *Bear* ("like a word in a catch" as Beauclerk said), was repeatedly heard at intervals, which coming from him who, by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting around could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded: "We are told, that the black bear is innocent; but I should not like to trust myself with him." Mr. Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice, "I should not like to trust myself with *you.*" This piece of sarcastick pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities.

Patriotism having become one of our topicks, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous

love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained, that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson) to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person, whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable, nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was: so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in."

Mrs. Pritchard being mentioned, he said, "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of Macbeth all through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin, out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut."

On Saturday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his *mistress* a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said (with a smile), "Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours."

Mrs. Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon-mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said, a certain celebrated actor was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-room with a long pole, and cry "Pray, gentlemen,

walk in;" and that a certain authour, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON. "Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added; there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets; that is done within, by the auctioneer."

Mrs. Thrale told us, that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bald manner, the story of Dr. Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly.[1] He made me say, "I *was born* in Scotland," instead of "I *come from* Scotland;" so that Johnson's saying, "That, sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help," had no point, or even meaning: and that upon this being mentioned to Mr. Fitzherbert, he observed, "It is not every man that can *carry* a *bon mot*."

On Monday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with Mr. Langton and the Irish Dr. Campbell, whom the General had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr. Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.[2]

1 P. 3. Vol. II.

2 Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me, because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my "Account of Corsica," he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank courteous air, said, "My name, sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be ac-

I must, again and again, intreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson, or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity.

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark,

"Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

He asserted, that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being; but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion, that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, "Never, but when he is drunk."

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his Life. He said, "I know no man whose Life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it."[1]

quainted with you." I was not a little flattered to be thus addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years,

"Or, driven by strong benevolence of soul,
Will fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole."

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, insomuch, that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged; and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation, seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion.

1 The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time; but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number

Mr. Scott of Amwell's Elegies were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed "They are very well; but such as twenty people might write." Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim,

> " ——— *mediocribus esse poetis*
> *Non Di, non homines, non concessêre columnæ:*"

for here (I observed) was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like every thing else, have different gradations of excellence, and consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that "as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind." I declared myself not satisfied. "Why, then, sir, (said he), Horace and you must settle it." He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of lace for his lady, he said, "Well, sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing (said the gentleman), but I do not know that I have done a wise thing." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestick satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is drest as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is drest."

of particulars, which I have committed to writing; but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him; for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life.

On Friday, April 14, being Good-Friday, I repaired to him in the morning, according to my usual custom on that day, and breakfasted with him. I observed that he fasted so very strictly, that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea; I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed: "Sir, the great misfortune now is, that government has too little power. All that it has to bestow must of necessity be given to support itself; so that it cannot reward merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a Bishop for his learning and piety;[1] his only chance for promotion is his being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministers in this reign have out-bid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man,—a man who meant well,—a man who had his blood full of prerogative,—was a theoretical statesman,—a book-minister,—and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the Crown alone. Then, sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the King to agree that the Judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new King. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the King popular by this concession; but the people never minded it; and it was a most impolitick measure. There is no reason why a Judge should hold his office for life, more than any other person in publick trust. A Judge may be partial otherwise than to the Crown: we have seen Judges partial to the populace. A Judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A Judge may become froward from age. A Judge may

1 From this too just observation there are some eminent exceptions.

grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being delivered from him by a new King. That is now gone by an act of Parliament *ex gratiâ* of the Crown. Lord Bute advised the King to give up a very large sum of money,[1] for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the King, but nothing to the publick, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean, that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them.—Lord Bute shewed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr. Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the King, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had ********** and **** to go on errands for him. He had occasion for people to go on errands for him; but he should not have had Scotchmen; and, certainly, he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England."

I told him, that the admission of one of them before the first people in England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at

1 The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war, which were given to his Majesty by the peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of 700,000*l.* and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at 200,000*l.* more. Surely, there was a noble munificence in this gift from a Monarch to his people. And let it be remembered, that during the Earl of Bute's administration, the King was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of 800,000*l.* a year; upon which Blackstone observes, that "The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the publick patrimony, will produce more, and be better collected than heretofore; and the publick is a gainer of upwards of 100,000*l.* *per annum*, by this disinterested bounty of his Majesty." Book I. Chap. viii. p. 330.

every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank; for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON. "True, sir; but **** should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He saw Lord Bute at all times; and could have said what he had to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no Prime Minister: there is only an agent for government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the Cabinet: but there is no one head there since Sir Robert Walpole's time." BOSWELL. "What then, sir, is the use of Parliament?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, Parliament is a large council to the King; and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who, for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, sir, the administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority."

"Lord Bute (he added) took down too fast, without building up something new." BOSWELL. "Because, sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses; it was necessary to change them." JOHNSON. "But he should have changed them one by one."

I told him that I had been informed by Mr. Orme, that many parts of the East-Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON. "That a country may be mapped, it must be tra-

velled over." "Nay (said I, meaning to laugh with him at one of his prejudices), can't you say, it is not *worth* mapping?"

As we walked to St. Clement's church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast-day of the Christian world, I remarked, that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good-Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country-towns. He said, it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He however owned, that London was too large; but added, "It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big, though the body were ever so large; that is to say, though the country were ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body."

Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church; and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the common-place complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON, (smiling). "Never fear, sir. Our commerce is in a very good state; and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country." I cannot omit to mention, that I never knew any man who was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own situation, or the state of the publick, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St. Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning

for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper: "It is finished."

After the evening service, he said, "Come, you shall go home with me, and sit just an hour." But he was better than his word; for after we had drunk tea with Mrs. Williams, he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined; for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such, that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed, "All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle, of his wife, or his wife's maid; but if a mere wish could attain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as, that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had, till very near his death, a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame; so that as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON. "That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Gold-

smith. It is difficult to get literary fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it." I said, it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON. "Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets." When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than we did, he said, in his acid manner, "He would cut a throat to fill his pockets, if it were not for fear of being hanged."

Dr. Johnson proceeded: "Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity: but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say, that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels."

He was pleased to say, "If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments." In his private register this evening is thus marked, "Boswell sat with me till night; we had some serious talk."[1] It also appears from the same record, that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties, in "giving Francis, his servant, some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life,

1 Prayers and Meditations, p. 138.

and resolving on better conduct." The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions, is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves, than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on this subject, "Sir, Hell is paved with good intentions."[1]

On Sunday, April 16, being Easter-day, after having attended the solemn service at St. Paul's, I dined with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON. "Sir, as a man advances in life, he gets what is better than admiration,—judgement, to estimate things at their true value." I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgement, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON. "No, sir; admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgement and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you:[2] but I

1 [This is a proverbial sentence. "Hell (says Herbert) is full of good meanings and wishings." JACULA PRUDENTUM, p. 11. edit. 1651. M.]

2 "Amoret! as sweet and good
As the most delicious food;
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.

Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness does incline;
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain."

don't believe you have borrowed from Waller. I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more."

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation (said he) must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE inquired more minutely about the medicine for the rheumatism, which I am sorry to hear that you still want. The receipt is this:

"Take equal quantities of flour of sulphur, and *flour* of mustard-seed, make them into an electuary with honey or treacle; and take a bolus as big as a nutmeg several times a day, as you can bear it: drinking after it a quarter of a pint of the infusion of the root of Lovage.

"Lovage, in Ray's 'Nomenclature,' is Levisticum: perhaps the Botanists may know the Latin name.

"Of this medicine I pretend not to judge. There is all the appearance of its efficacy, which a single instance can afford: the patient was very old, the pain very violent, and the relief, I think, speedy and lasting.

"My opinion of alterative medicine is not high, but *quid tentasse nocebit?* if it does harm, or does no good, it may be omitted; but that it may do good,

you have, I hope, reason to think is desired by, sir, your most affectionate,

"Humble servant,

"April 17, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Tuesday, April 11, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr. Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham. Dr. Johnson's tardiness was such, that Sir Joshua, who had an appointment at Richmond, early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horseback, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits, that every thing seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Publick practice of any art, (he observed), and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female." I happened to start a question, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON. "No, sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him," (smiling).

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or, rather as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON. "It is wonderful, sir, how rare a quality good humour is in life. We meet with very few good humoured men." I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at ease in the coach, and

smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, "I look upon *myself* as a good humoured fellow." The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great Lexicographer, the stately Moralist, the masterly Critick, as if he had been *Sam* Johnson, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, "No, no, sir; that will *not* do. You are good natured, but not good humoured: you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape."

I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and news-papers, in which his "Journey to the Western Islands" was attacked in every mode; and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present: they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr. Maclaurin, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. "This (said he) is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself." He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch;—"Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal." "There is (said he) in Scotland a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant has as much learning as one of their clergy."

He talked of Isaac Walton's Lives, which was one of his most favourite books. Dr. Donne's Life, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed,

that "it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now." He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linen-draper and sempster, and was only an authour;[1] and added, "that he was a great panegyrist." BOSWELL. "No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, flattery pleases very generally. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true: but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered."

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr. Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books.[2] Sir Joshua observed (aside), "He runs to the books as I do to the pictures: but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books." Mr. Cambridge, upon this, politely said, "Dr. Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom

1 [Johnson's conjecture was erroneous. Walton did not retire from business till 1643. But in 1664 Dr. King, Bishop of Chichester, in a letter prefixed to his LIVES, mentions his having been familiarly acquainted with him for forty years: and in 1631 he was so intimate with Dr. Donne, that he was one of the friends who attended him on his death-bed. J. B.—O.]

2 [The first time he dined with me, he was shewn into my book room, and instantly pored over the lettering of each volume within his reach. My collection of books is very miscellaneous, and I feared there might be some among them that he would not like. But seeing the number of volumes very considerable, he said, "You are an honest man, to have formed so great an accumulation of knowledge." B.]

which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books." Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about and answered, "Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries." Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument. "Yes (said I), he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword; he is through your body in an instant."

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family and much good company; among whom was Mr. Harris of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his "Journey to the Western Islands."

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made;—JOHNSON. "We must consider how very little history there is; I mean real authentick history. That certain Kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy of history is conjecture." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanack, a mere chronological series of remarkable events." Mr. Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his history, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present; but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with JOHNSON?[1]

1 See p. 71.

Johnson observed, that the force of our early habits was so great, that though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this; and in many cases, it is a very painful truth; for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented, by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superiour efficacy.

"The Beggar's Opera," and the common question, whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced;—JOHNSON. "As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to 'The Beggar's Opera' than it in reality ever had; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time I do not deny that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing."[1] Then collecting himself, as it

1 A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure, and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway, immediately after being present at the representation of "The Beggar's Opera." I have been told of an ingenious observation by Mr. Gibbon, that "The Beggar's Opera may, perhaps, have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen; but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite, in short, more like gentlemen." Upon this Mr. Courtenay said, that "Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen."

were, to give a heavy stroke: "There is in it such a *labefactation* of all principles, as may be injurious to morality."

While he pronounced this response, we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his life of Gay, he has been still more decisive as to the inefficiency of "The Beggar's Opera" in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently; for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgement to resist so imposing an aggregate: yet, I own, I should be very sorry to have "The Beggar's Opera" suppressed; for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits delights me more.

The late "*worthy*" Duke of Queensberry, as Thomson, in his "Seasons," justly characterises him, told me, that when Gay shewed him "The Beggar's Opera," his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing." It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the authour or his friends. Mr. Cambridge, however, shewed us to-day, that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song,

"Oh ponder well! be not severe!"

the audience being much affected by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

> "For on the rope that hangs my Dear,
> Depends poor Polly's life."

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in publick, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, "He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publickly for hire? No, sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a publick singer, as readily as let my wife be one."

Johnson arraigned the modern politicks of this country, as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. "Politicks (said he) are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politicks, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation,

and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters, which was upon men's minds at the time; to their knowing them, at table and in the street; in short, being familiar with them; and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the people. Had that been the case, Parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government." CAMBRIDGE. "There have been many sad victims to absolute government." JOHNSON. "So, sir, have there been to popular factions." BOSWELL. "The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?"

Johnson praised "The SPECTATOR," particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said, "Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as has been generally fancied. He was not killed; he died only because others were to die, and because his death af-

forded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have the example of Cervantes making Don Quixote die.—I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something superinduced upon it; but the superstructure did not come."

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for sending forth collections of them not only in Greek and Latin, but even in Syriack, Arabick, and other more unknown tongues. Johnson. "I would have as many of these as possible; I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that an University is to have at once two hundred poets; but it should be able to shew two hundred scholars. Pieresc's death was lamented, I think, in forty languages. And I would have had at every coronation, and every death of a king, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, University verses, in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world to be thus told, 'Here is a school where every thing may be learnt.'"

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend, Mr. Temple,[1] at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the second of May, I did not see Dr. Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining part of my stay in London, kept very imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I, according to my usual custom, written out at large soon after the time, much might have been preserved, which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some

1 Page 45.

particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia.* But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I have to present my readers with arguments upon two law cases, which which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the sixth of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned,[1] which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of Session, by Dr. Memis, of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *Doctor of Medicine.*

"THERE are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *Doctor of Medicine,* because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship, or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name of his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man's reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate, from which he shrinks, that he owes his right of practising physick. A doctor of Medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a Doctor usurps a profession, and is authorized only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a Doctor, his diploma makes evident; a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought, is not easily discovered.

"All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position, or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him Doctor, a false

1 Page 19.

appellation was given him, he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title, would be offended if we supposed him to be not a Doctor. If the title of Doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges; for why should the publick give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach? It may likewise deserve the notice of the publick to consider what help can be given to the professors of physick, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say, *There goes the Doctor.*

"What is implied by the term Doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted, as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A Doctor of Laws is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A Doctor of Medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. This is an old axiom which no man has yet thought fit to deny, *Nil dat quod non habet.* Upon this principle to be Doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit.* In England, whoever practises physick, not being a Doctor, must practise by a licence: but the doctorate conveys a licence in itself.

"By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where in effect that which was applied to him was the most honourable, perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it.[1] But, probably, as

1 In justice to Dr. Memis, though I was against him as an Advocate, I must mention, that he objected to the variation very earnestly, before the translation was printed off.

they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and, therefore, consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience."

A few days afterwards, I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson and others* against *Alexander and others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session, determining that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers, because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority, had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject:

"THERE is a difference between majority and superiority; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power; and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater *number* is not corrupt, the greater *weight* is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken *collectively*, though, perhaps, taken *numerically*, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That borough, which is so constituted as to act corruptly, is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrolable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection, in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great and small, subsist upon this condition; that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences; that as those who do nothing, and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing, or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption."

This in my opinion was a very nice case; but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords.

On Monday, May 8, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam. I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr. Wedderburne (now Lord Loughborough), Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Foote; and I had heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it was William Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing for his cruelties in Scotland, in 1746.[1] There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day; but the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, "You know, sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind." And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, "Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw."

On Friday, May 12, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally, when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found every thing in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity. I asked Johnson whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as that appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way, as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest.

1 My very honourable friend General Sir George Howard, who served in the Duke of Cumberland's army, has assured me that the cruelties were not imputable to his Royal Highness.

JOHNSON. "Why, sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it: but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation."

On Saturday, May 13, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch Advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea and rolls and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus, were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprised, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness and roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchymy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold; and told us that it was affirmed, that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added, that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him?—JOHNSON. "I do not see, sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him: but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loath to be angry at himself."

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23d, I was

frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks: one concerning Garrick: "He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning rather than the meaning by the Latin." And another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, "were more defective than any other writers."

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is, "much laughing." It should seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularity and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose, that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom, produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE an old amanuensis in great distress. I have given what I think I can give, and begged till I cannot tell where to beg again. I put into his hands this morning four guineas. If you could collect three guineas more, it would clear him from his present difficulty. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 21, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I MAKE no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your ad-

ventures to Mrs. Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind mamma.

"Mrs. Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr. Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida[1] to follow him. Beauclerk talks of going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday; so there is nothing but dispersion.

"I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

"I promised Mrs. Macaulay[2] that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland, he can make no figure in our Universities. The schools in the north, I believe, are cheap; and when I was a young man, were eminently good.

"There are two little books published by the Foulis, Telemachus and Collins's poems; each a shilling; I would be glad to have them.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little fit to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters.

"I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loath to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hos-

1 A learned Greek.

2 Wife of the Reverend Mr. Kenneth Macaulay, authour of "The History of St. Kilda."

pitality, and Scotch beauty, and of every thing Scotch, but Scotch oat-cakes, and Scotch prejudices.

"Let me know the answer of Rasay, and the decision relating to Sir Allan.[1] I am, my dearest sir, with great affection,

"Your most obliged, and
"Most humble servant,
"May 27, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

After my return to Scotland, I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages:

"I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his 'Annals.' I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them."

"There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain at my house. Mr. Donald Macqueen[2] and Lord Monboddo supped with me one evening. They joined in controverting your proposition, that the Gaelick of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late."

"My mind has been somewhat dark this summer. I have need of your warming and vivifying rays; and I hope I shall have them frequently. I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties. Having seen nothing I had not

1 A lawsuit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, Chief of his Clan, to recover certain parts of his family estates from the Duke of Argyle.

2 A very learned minister in the Isle of Sky, whom both Dr. Johnson and I have mentioned with regard.

seen before, I have nothing to relate. Time has left that part of the island few antiquities; and commerce has left the people no singularities. I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home; which is, in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad. Is not this the state of life? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it; for all the wise and all the good say, that we may cure it.

"For the black fumes which rise in your mind, I can prescribe nothing but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasure, and by reading, sometimes easy and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful; and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects.

* * * * * *

"That I should have given pain to Rasay, I am sincerely sorry; and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the Chieftainship. I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation, in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the paper.

"That Lord Monboddo and Mr. Macqueen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice, might be easily imagined; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy: if there are men with tails, catch an *homo caudatus;* if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides, in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write, they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

"I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes's history, which I purpose to return all the next week: that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense, makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language, or affected subtilty of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

"Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your 'Journal,'[1] that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.

"Of Mrs. Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

"Never, my dear sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem; I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you, as Hamlet has it, 'in my heart of hearts,' and therefore, it is little to say, that I am, sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"London, August 27, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

1 My "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," which that lady read in the original manuscript.

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

"If in these papers[1] there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent. I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection.

"Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart.

"I am, sir,
"Yours affectionately,
"Sam. Johnson."

"August 30, 1775."

TO THE SAME.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected. Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge; for my regard for you is so radicated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind, and cannot be effaced but by some cause uncommonly violent; therefore whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey.

* * * * * *

"Your friends are all well at Streatham, and in Leicester-fields.[2] Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, if she is in good humour with me.

"I am, sir, &c.
"Sam. Johnson."

"September 14, 1775."

1 Another parcel of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland."
2 Where Sir Joshua Reynolds lived.

What he mentions in such light terms as, "I am to set out to-morrow on another journey," I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

"TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

"Sept. 18, 1775,
Calais.

"DEAR SIR,

"WE are here in France, after a very pleasing passage of no more than six hours. I know not when I shall write again, and therefore I write now, though you cannot suppose that I have much to say. You have seen France yourself. From this place we are going to Rouen, and from Rouen to Paris, where Mr. Thrale designs to stay about five or six weeks. We have a regular recommendation to the English resident, so we shall not be taken for vagabonds. We think to go one way and return another, and for as much as we can, I will try to speak a little French; I tried hitherto but little, but I spoke sometimes. If I heard better, I suppose I should learn faster. I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR, "Paris, Oct. 22, 1775.

"WE are still here, commonly very busy in looking about us. We have been to-day at Versailles. You have seen it, and I shall not describe it. We came yesterday from Fontainbleau, where the Court is now. We went to see the King and Queen at

dinner, and the Queen was so impressed by Miss,[1] that she sent one of the Gentlemen to inquire who she was. I find all true that you have ever told me at Paris. Mr. Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table; but I think our cookery very bad. Mrs. Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kindly used by the English Benedictine friars. But upon the whole I cannot make much acquaintance here; and though the churches, palaces, and some private houses are very magnificent, there is no very great pleasure after having seen many, in seeing more; at least the pleasure, whatever it be, must some time have an end, and we are beginning to think when we shall come home. Mr. Thrale calculates that as we left Streatham on the fifteenth of September, we shall see it again about the fifteenth of November.

"I think I had not been on this side of the sea five days before I found a sensible improvement in my health. I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretti. Baretti is a fine fellow, and speaks French, I think, quite as well as English.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Williams; and give my love to Francis; and tell my friends that I am not lost. I am, dear sir,

"Your affectionate humble, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, Edinburgh, Oct. 24, 1775.

"IF I had not been informed that you were at Paris, you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my son,

1 Miss Thrale.

on the 9th instant; I have named him Alexander, after my father. I now write, as I suppose your fellow-traveller, Mr. Thrale, will return to London this week, to attend his duty in Parliament, and that you will not stay behind him.

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's 'Annals.' I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus requests in a letter to me: 'I intend soon to give you 'The Life of Robert Bruce,' which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr. Johnson. I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr. Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince. If he finds materials for it in my work, it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents.'

"I suppose by '*The Life of Robert Bruce*,' his Lordship means that part of his 'Annals' which relates the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

"Shall we have '*A Journey to Paris*' from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn, from that which you viewed in autumn 1773! I ever am, my dear sir,

"Your much obliged and
"Affectionate humble servant,
"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM glad that the young Laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you

can ever have with Mrs. Boswell.[1] I know that she does not love me; but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her.

"Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the publick any thing of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself. We can talk of it when we meet.

"I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the 'History' every post. Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say, that I do not see any great reason for writing it; but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

"I have been remarkably healthy all the journey, and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated. Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm or sincere than those of, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"November 16, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.[2]

"DEAR MADAM,

"THIS week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty;

1 This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession.

2 There can be no doubt that many years previous to 1775, he corresponded with this lady, who was his step-daughter, but none of his earlier letters to her have been preserved.

[Since the death of the authour, several of Johnson's letters to Mrs. Lucy Porter, written before 1775, were obligingly communicated by the Rev. Dr. Vyse to Mr. Malone, and are printed in the present edition. M.]

but I know not whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it, when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretti with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however, are very splendid and magnificent; and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures; but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

"Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

"Make my compliments to all my friends; and, if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write, if it be troublesome to you. I am, dear madam,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"Nov. 16, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR MADAM,

"SOME weeks ago I wrote to you, to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

"When I was in France, I thought myself growing young, but am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

"I never knew whether you received the Com-

mentary on the New Testament, and the Travels, and the glasses.

"Do, my dear love, write to me; and do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr. Porter,[1] nor heard of him. Is he with you?

"Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Adey, and Mrs. Cobb, and all my friends; and when I can do any good, let me know. I am, dear madam,

"Yours most affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"December, 1775."

It is to be regretted, that he did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that "he could write the Life of a Broomstick," so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to shew me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them has been lost, or perhaps, destroyed in a precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented: one small paper-book, however, entitled "FRANCE II." has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shews an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this

1 Son of Mrs. Johnson, by her first husband.

tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection.

"Oct. 10, Tuesday. We saw the *Ecole Militaire*, in which one hundred and fifty young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age;—flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine except the council-room. The French have large squares in the windows;—they make good iron palisades. Their meals are gross.

"We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron. The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet. Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms.

"We walked to a small convent of the Fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay the lives of the Saints.

"Oct. 11. Wednesday. We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

"Thence we went to Mr. Monville's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance.—Porphyry.

"Thence we went to St. Roque's church, which is very large;—the lower part of the pillars incrusted with marble.—Three chapels behind the high altar;—the last a mass of low arches.—Altars, I believe all round.

"We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover-square.—Inhabited by the high families.—Lewis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

"Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of Chatlois is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe.

"We dined with Boccage, the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady.—The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear. Mr. Le Roy, Count Manucci, the Abbé, the Prior, and Father Wilson, who staid with me, till I took him home in the coach.

"Bathiani is gone.

"The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor.—Monk not necessarily a priest.—Benedictines rise at four;—are at church an hour and half; at church again half an hour before, half an hour after, dinner; and again from half an hour after seven to eight. They may sleep eight hours.—Bodily labour wanted in monasteries.

"The poor taken to hospitals, and miserably kept.—Monks in the convent fifteen:—accounted poor.

"Oct. 12. Thursday. We went to the Gobelins.—Tapestry makes a good picture;—imitates flesh exactly.—One piece with a gold ground;—the birds not exactly coloured.—Thence we went to the King's cabinet;—very neat, not, perhaps, perfect.—Gold ore.—Candles of the candle-tree.—Seeds.—Woods.—Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never had seen before.—Vases.—Pictures.—The dragon china.—The lustre said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3,500l.—The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000l.—Damask hangings covered with pictures.—Porphyry.—This house struck me.—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's.—Captain Irwin

with us.[1]—Spain. County towns all beggars.—At Dijon he could not find the way to Orleans.—Cross roads of France very bad.—Five soldiers.—Woman.—Soldiers escaped.—The Colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman.—The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by the Colonel's permission.—Good inn at Nismes.—Moors of Barbary fond of Englishmen.—Gibraltar eminently healthy;—it has beef from Barbary.—There is a large garden.—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.

"Oct. 13. Friday. I staid at home all day, only went to find the prior, who was not at home.—I read something in Canus.[2]—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo.*

"Oct. 14. Saturday. We went to the house of Mr. Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold.—The ladies' closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper. They always place mirrours to reflect their rooms.

"Then we went to Julien's, the Treasurer of the Clergy:—30,000l. a year.—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrours, and covered with gold.—Books of wood here, and in another library.

"At D********'s I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, shewed them to Mr. T.—*Prince Titi; Bibl. des Fées,* and other books.—She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

"Then we went to Julien Le Roy, the King's watch-maker, a man of character in his business, who

1 The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin.

2 Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise *De Locis Theologicis*, in twelve books.

shewed a small clock made to find the longitude.—A decent man.

"Afterwards we saw the *Palais Marchand,* and the Courts of Justice, civil and criminal.—Queries on the *Sellette.*—This building has the old Gothick passages, and a great appearance of antiquity.—Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

"Much disturbed; hope no ill will be.[1]

"In the afternoon I visited Mr. Freron the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me.—His house not splendid, but of commodious size.—His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated but decent.—I was pleased with my reception.—He is to translate my books, which I am to send him with notes.

"Oct. 15. Sunday. At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m. from Paris.—The terrace noble along the river.—The rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces. —The chapel beautiful, but small.—China globes. —Inlaid tables.—Labyrinth.—Sinking table.—Toilet tables.

"Oct. 16. Monday. The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty.—A very great collection of pictures. —Three of Raphael.—Two Holy Family.—One small piece of M. Angelo.—One room of Rubens.—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

"The Thuilleries.—Statues.—Venus.—Æn. and Anchises in his arms.—Nilus.—Many more. The walks not open to mean persons.—Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece.—Pont tournant.

"Austin nuns.—Grate.—Mrs. Fermor, Abbess.— She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable.— Mrs. —— has many books;—has seen life.—Their

1 This passage, which so many think superstitious, reminds me of Archbishop Laud's Diary.

frontlet disagreeable.—Their hood.—Their life easy. —Rise about five ; hour and half in chapel.—Dine at ten.—Another hour and half at chapel ; half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven :—four hours in chapel.—A large garden.—Thirteen pensioners.—Teacher complained.

" At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there.—Rope-dancing and farce.—Egg dance.

" N. [Note.] Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

" Oct. 17. Tuesday. At the Palais Marchand I bought

A snuff-box,	24L.
————	6
Table book	15
Scissars 3 p [pair]	18
	——
	63—2 12 6

" We heard the lawyers plead.—N. As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year.—*Chambre de question.*—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand. —An old venerable building.

" The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé. Only one small wing shewn ;—lofty ;—splendid ;—gold and glass.—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms. The present Prince a grandsire at thirty-nine.

" The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them. As I entered, my wife was in my mind :[1] she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

" N. In France there is no middle rank.

1 His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his " Prayers and Meditations," appears very feelingly in this passage.

"So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris.—The palaces of Louvre and Thuilleries granted out in lodgings.

"In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

"The French beds commended.—Much of the marble, only paste.

"The colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

"Oct. 18. Wednesday. We went to Fontainebleau, which we found a large mean town, crowded with people.—The forest thick with woods, very extensive.—Manucci secured us lodgings.—The appearance of the country pleasant.—No hills, few streams, only one hedge.—I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road.—Pavement still, and rows of trees.

"N. Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

"Oct. 19. Thursday. At Court, we saw the apartments;—the King's bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid.—Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes;—servants and masters.—Brunet with us the second time.

"The introductor came to us;—civil to me.—Presenting.—I had scruples.—Not necessary.—We went and saw the King and Queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner.—Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené.—At night we went to a comedy. I neither saw nor heard.—Drunken women.—Mrs. Th. preferred one to the other.

"Oct. 20. Friday. We saw the Queen mount in the forest—Brown habit; rode aside: one lady rode aside.—The Queen's horse light grey;—martingale.—She galloped.—We then went to the apartments, and admired them.—Then wandered through the palace.—In the passages, stalls and shops.—Painting

in Fresco by a great master, worn out.—We saw the King's horses and dogs.—The dogs almost all English. —Degenerate.

"The horses not much commended.—The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

"At night the ladies went to the opera. I refused, but should have been welcome.

"The King fed himself with his left hand as we.

"Saturday, 21. In the night I got round.—We came home to Paris.—I think we did not see the chapel.—Tree broken by the wind.—The French chairs made all of boards painted.

"N. Soldiers at the court of justice.—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman.[1]

"Faggots in the palace.—Every thing slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

"Women's saddles seem ill made.—Queen's bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

"Sunday, Oct. 22. To Versailles, a mean town. Carriages of business passing.—Mean shops against the wall.—Our way lay through Sêve, where the China manufacture.—Wooden bridge at Sêve, in the way to Versailles.—The palace of great extent.—The front long; I saw it not perfectly.—The Menagerie. Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame. —Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind, young.— Aviary, very large: the net, wire.—Black stag of China, small.—Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches 'cross; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal, though young; as big, perhaps, as four oxen. —The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing. —The brown bear put out his paws;—all very tame.

1 See p. 112.

—The lion.—The tigers I did not well view.—The camel, or dromedary with two bunches called the Huguin,[1] taller than any horse.—Two camels with one bunch.—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed: he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

"Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico; the pavement, and, I think, the pillars, of marble.—There are many rooms, which I do not distinctly remember—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis XIV. by the Venetian State.—In the council-room almost all that was not door or window was, I think, looking-glass.—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house.—The upper floor paved with brick.—Little Vienne.—The court is ill paved.—The rooms at the top are small, fit to sooth the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basons of water on the terrace, and other basons, I think, below them. There are little courts.—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrours, not very large, but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made.—The play-house was very large.—The chapel I do not remember if we saw—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon.—The foreign office paved with bricks.—The dinner half a Louis each, and, I think, a Louis over.—Money given at Menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

"Oct. 23. Monday. Last night I wrote to Levet.——We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps

1 This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.

the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate upon another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal; they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aqua fortis: they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre. The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slided till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury; the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

"In the way I saw the Grêve, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

"We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer.[1] He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells

1 [The detestable ruffian, who afterwards conducted Louis the Sixteenth to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it, during his murder. M.]

his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d. a bottle. He brews 4,000 barrels a year. There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he;—reckoning them at 3,000 each, they make 51,000 a year.—They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

" The moat of the Bastile is dry.

" Oct. 24. Tuesday. We visited the King's library—I saw the *Speculum humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black; part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut in boards.—The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in 62; it has no date; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types.—I am in doubt; the print is large and fair, in two folios.—Another book was shewn me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types;—I think, *Durandi Sanctuarium* in 58. This is inferred from the difference of form sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons.—The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal.—I saw nothing but the *Speculum* which I had not seen, I think, before.

" Thence to the Sorbonne.—The library very large, not in lattices like the King's. *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*, many folios.—*Histoire Geneologique of France*, 9 vol.—*Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to. the last, f. 12 vol.—The Prior and Librarian dined [with us]:—I waited on them home.—Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students.—The Doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal;—choose those who succeed to vacancies.—Profit little.

"Oct. 25. Wednesday. I went with the Prior to St. Cloud, to see Dr. Hooke.—We walked round the palace, and had some talk.—I dined with our whole company at the Monastery.—In the library, *Beroald*, —*Cymon*,—*Titus*, from Boccace.—*Oratio Proverbialis* to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys;—Dryden's Preface to the third vol. of Miscellanies.[1]

"Oct. 26. Thursday. We saw the China at Sêve, cut, glazed, painted. Bellevue, a pleasing house, not great: fine prospect.—Meudon, an old palace.—Alexander, in Porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks.—Plato and Aristotle.—Noble terrace overlooks the town.—St. Cloud.—Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing.—In the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine.—Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded. —Gough and Keene.—Hooke came to us at the inn. —A message from Drumgold.

"Oct. 27. Friday. I staid at home.—Gough and Keene, and Mrs. S———'s friend dined with us.—This day we began to have a fire.—The weather is grown very cold, and I fear has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"Sat. Oct. 28. I visited the Grand Chartreux built by St. Louis.—It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more.—The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment.—Mr. Baretti says four rooms; I remember but three.—His books seemed to be French.—His garden was neat; he gave me grapes.—We saw the Place de

1 He means, I suppose, that he read these different pieces, while he remained in the library.

Victoire, with the statues of the King, and the captive nations.

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut.—We climbed to the top stairs.—I dined with Colbrooke, who had much company:—Foote, Sir George Rodney, Motteux, Udson, Taaf.—Called on the Prior, and found him in bed.

"Hotel—a guinea a day.—Coach, three guineas a week.—Valet de place, three l. a day.—*Avantcoureur*, a guinea a week.—Ordinary dinner, six l. a head.—Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day.—Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon.—Our travelling is ten guineas a day.

"White stockings, 18l.[1] Wig.—Hat.

"Sunday, Oct. 29. We saw the boarding-school.—The *Enfans trouvés*.—A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour.—They lose a third; take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them.—Want nurses.—Saw their chapel.

"Went to St. Eustatia; saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist.—Boys taught at one time, girls at another.—The sermon; the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at the name:—his action uniform, not very violent.

"Oct. 30. Monday. We saw the library of St. Germain.—A very noble collection.—*Codex Divinorum Officiorum*, 1459:—a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same.—The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheym.—*Meursius*, 12 v. fol.—*Amadis*, in

1 [i. e. 18 *livres*. Two pair of white silk stockings were probably purchased. M.]

French, 3 v. fol.—CATHOLICON *sine colophone*, but of 1460.—Two other editions,[1] one by
Augustin. de Civitate Dei, without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems.

"I dined with Col. Drumgold; had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St. Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"Oct. 31. Tuesday. I lived at the Benedictines; meagre day; soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce; fried fish; lentils, tasteless in themselves. In the library; where I found *Maffeus's de Historiâ Indicâ: Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape.* I parted very tenderly from the Prior and Friar Wilkes.

"*Maitre des Arts*, 2 y.—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y.—*Licentiate*, 2 y.—*Doctor Th.* 2 y. in all 9 years.—For the Doctorate three disputations, *Major, Minor, Sorbonica.*—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuit's College.

"Nov. 1. Wednesday. We left Paris.—St. Denis, a large town; the church not very large, but the middle isle is very lofty and awful.—On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroy the symmetry of the sides. The organ is higher above the pavement than any I have ever seen.—The gates are of brass.—On the middle gate is the history of our Lord.—The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful.—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the

1 I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Mattaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the "*Catholicon*," which Dr. Johnson mentions here, with *names* which I cannot make out. I read "one by *Latinius*, one by *Boedinus*." I have deposited the original MS. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgements are due to Mr. Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.

portal is a dome; we could not enter further, and it was almost dark.

"Nov. 2. Thursday. We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé.—This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes.—The water seems to be too near the house.—All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried under ground.—The house is magnificent.—The cabinet seems well stocked; what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small, that I doubt its reality.—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth.—Nothing was in spirits; all was dry.—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout.—The toucan, long broad beak.—The stables were of very great length.—The kennel had no scents.—There was a mockery of a village.—The Menagerie had few animals.[1]—Two faussans,[2] or Brasilian weasels, spotted, very wild.—There is a forest, and, I think, a park.—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

"Nov. 3. Friday. We came to Compeigne, a very

1 The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be decyphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess.—Dr. Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.

2 It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *fossane*. It should be observed, that the person who shewed this Menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brasilian weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's "Synopsis of Quadrupeds."

large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court.—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise. —Talk of painting.—The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid.—I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier. —At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city.— The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothick and Corinthian.—We entered a very noble parochial church.—Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

"Nov. 4. Saturday. We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambray, not long after three. —We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

"Nov. 5. Sunday. We saw the Cathedral.—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side.—The choir splendid.—The balustrade in one part brass.—The Neff very high and grand. The altar silver as far as it is seen.—The vestments very splendid.—At the Benedictines church———"

Here his Journal[1] ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any more after this time, I know not; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination, as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propa-

1 My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Andrew Lumisden, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr. Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.

gated, *that he could not see;* and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it; but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there, would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgold, a very high man, sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire,* a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetorick, and then became a soldier. And, sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent."

He observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean; the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England; and Mr. Thrale justly observed, that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity; for they could not eat their meat, unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people; they will spit upon any place. At Madame ———'s, a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside; but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise.* The spout of the tea-pot did not pour freely; she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in every thing but climate. Nature has done more for the French; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done."

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same

time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there, was abundantly ludicrous. He told me, that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London;[1]—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned, that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." JOHNSON. "Players, sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint-stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs."—"But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others."

While Johnson was in France, he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down, by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferiour, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the Royal Academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his Excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to

1 [Mr. Foote seems to have *embellished* a little in saying that Johnson did not alter his dress at Paris; as in his Journal is a memorandum about white stockings, wig, and hat. In another place we are told that "during his travels in France he was furnished with a French-made wig of handsome construction." That Johnson was not inattentive to his appearance is certain, from a circumstance related by Mr. Steevens, and inserted by Mr. Boswell, between June 15 and June 22, 1784. I. B.]

[Mr. Blakeway's observation is further confirmed by a note in Johnson's diary (quoted by Sir John Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*, p. 517), by which it appears, that he laid out thirty pounds in clothes for his French journey. M.]

Johnson's English pronunciation: yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank, who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise,—he answered, "because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769; yet he wrote it, I imagine, pretty well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one:

A Madame La Comtesse de ——.

"July 16, 1775.

"OUI, *Madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut il partir? Est ce que je m'ennuye? Je m'ennuyerai ailleurs. Est ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espere rien. Aller voir ce que j'ai vû, etre un peu rejoué, un peu degouté, me resouvenir que la vie se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors; voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'année. Que Dieu vous donne, Madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y livrer trop.*"

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner; and in justice to him it is proper to add, that Dr. Johnson told me I might rely both to the correctness of his memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. "When Madame de Boufflers was first in England (said Beauclerk), she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his cham-

bers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple-lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who, it seems, upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and eager to shew himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple-gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Pere Boscovich was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and at Dr. Douglas's, now Bishop of Salisbury. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation. When at Paris, Johnson thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the Journalist: "*Vir est acerrimi ingenii et paucarum literarum.*"

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Edinburgh, Dec. 5, 1775.

"MR. ALEXANDER MACLEAN, the young Laird of Col, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his

brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to shew attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am with respectful attachment, my dear sir,

"Your most obliged
"And most humble servant,
"JAMES BOSWELL."

Mr. Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of this year Dr. Burney informs me that "he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted."

A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman recollects, should here be inserted.

"I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me."

"The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath."

"There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other."

"More is learned in publick than in private schools, from emulation; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises,

yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody."

"I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known, as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss ——— was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is,

'To suckle fools, and chronicle small-beer.'

She tells the children, 'This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.' If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*."

"After having talked slightingly of musick, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss. Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, 'Why don't you dash away like Burney?' Dr. Burney upon this said to him, 'I believe, sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.' Johnson with candid complacency replied, 'Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.'"

"He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before any body appeared. When on a subsequent day he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by

alluding to the extraordinary morning, when he had been too early. 'Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*.'"

"Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, 'Why, sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man's face has had more wear and tear.'"

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him December 18, not in good spirits. "Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence has seized you severely: sometimes my imagination, which is upon occasions prolifick of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"NEVER dream of any offence. How should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent; I shall make haste to disperse them; but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

"Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes, I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his Lordship. Mr. Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted; he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

"You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser.

"I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping; I have had quieter nights than are common with me.

"I cannot but rejoice that Joseph[1] has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

"Young Col brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being.

"I have had a letter from Rasay, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

"My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who does not love me; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them. I am, my dear, dear sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"December 23, 1775." "SAM. JOHNSON."

In 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the publick: but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

1 Joseph Ritter a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr. Johnson and me in our Tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far and far behind. Why I did not despatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover: but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill: every body else is as usual.

"Among the papers, I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened; and a paper for 'The Chronicle,' which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both.

"I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume for which, I return my most respectful thanks.

"I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady (for I know she does not love me), and the young ladies, and the young Laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"Jan. 10, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr. Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it, was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities,

which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manour of Auchinleck (pronounced *Affléck*), in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, "*dilecto familiari nostro;*" and assigning, as the cause of the grant, "*pro bono et fideli servitio nobis præstito.*" Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his Sovereign, at the fatal field of Floddon, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs male, to David Boswell, my father's great grand uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burthened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only re-purchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands; and my father, who was one of the Judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege

allowed by our law,[1] to secure it to his family in perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of his marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs male, however remote, which I maintained by arguments which appeared to me to have considerable weight.[2] And in the parti-

1 Acts of Parliament of Scotland, 1685, Cap. 22.

2 As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort; which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of scripture, "He was yet *in the loins of his* FATHER when Melchisedeck met him;" (Heb. vii. 10). and consequently that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood.—And secondly, independent of this theory (which, if true, should completely exclude heirs general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay, even a grandson by a son, to a daughter), be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest; because,—however distant from the representative at the time,—that remote heir male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant.—A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance; in

cular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which we held it, which was as heirs, male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr. Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I WAS much impressed by your letter, and if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it: but whether I am equal to it, I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could not you tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a Lawyer. I suppose he is

which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants.

I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate, is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere *probability* there will be a *certainty* that *the nearest heir male, at whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir male, namely, *the original purchaser's eldest son.*

above partiality, and above loquacity: and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me, as any thing occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

"If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational, is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

"Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell; and tell her, that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles. I am, dear sir, most affectionately,

"Your humble servant,

"London, Jan. 15, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write, because you request it.

"Land is like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner; and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgement shall direct, or passion incite.

"But natural right would avail little without the protection of law; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore, in society, not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

"In the exercise of the right which law either

leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

"Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it, that he can sell it, and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

"Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole; his posterity would be disappointed; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

"He that may do more may do less. He that, by selling, or squandering, may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part, by a partial settlement.

"Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes: the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

"As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know; and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and free-will be kept unviolated? I sland to be treated with more reverence than liberty?—If this consideration should

restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females?

"Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portions to his daughter? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land, and of leaving money to be raised from land; between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

"Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance; would not then the tenure of estates be changed? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another?

"You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers:[1] I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

"As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention; for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted.

"Intentions must be gathered from acts. When

1 Which term I applied to all the heirs male.

he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not, in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males? If he could have done it, he seems to have shewn, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

"If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement; and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example; it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shewn to remote relations.

"As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath any thing, but upon legal terms; he can grant no power which the law denies; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the power which the law allows.

"Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended this act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother.

"If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded?

"It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote; and the exclusion is purely consequential.

"These, dear sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence.

"I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a Lawyer and a Christian.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. I am, sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"Feb. 3, 1773." "SAM. JOHNSON."

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His Lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that "the succession of heirs general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record;" observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs male: and that though an heir male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time; and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burthens upon it, there was nothing given the heir male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience (said his Lordship), which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side."

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr. Johnson, begging to hear from him again, upon this interesting question.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATHI MAHAL

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"HAVING not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position: 'He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestors, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgement or opinion.' If this be true, you may join with your father.

"Further consideration produces another conclusion: 'He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain, if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity. For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason?' If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

"It cannot but occur that 'Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.' When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them; but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

"These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously,[1] if it contains any conviction, includes this position likewise, that only he who ac-

1 I had reminded him of his observation, mentioned, vol. ii. p. 346.

quires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed, that 'he who inherits an estate, inherits all the power legally concomitant;' and that 'He who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence.' In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples.

"If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave; and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

"Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions; I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition, that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability which we discover. Providence gives the power, of which reason teaches the use. I am, dear sir,

"Your most faithful servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

"Feb. 9, 1776."

"I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell; make my compliments to her, and to the little people.

"Don't burn papers; they may be safe enough in your own box,—you will wish to see them hereafter."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.[1] I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly, and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilized countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our consti-

1 The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses was settled by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the lands. I was freed by Dr. Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters: for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.

tution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are Barbarians, their want of *Stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you will never find. I am afraid of scruples.

"I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers; part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice; I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before.

"Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume: his accuracy strikes me with wonder; his narrative is far superiour to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned.

"I am afraid that the trouble, which my irregularity and delay has cost him, is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense; but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

"Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"February 15, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 20, 1776.

* * * * * *

"You have illuminated my mind, and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obliga-

tion. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better not to act too suddenly."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM glad that what I could think or say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act, till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not be rash. I hope that as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty.

"When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

"You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge,[1] and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. * * * * * *.

"I am, dear sir,

"Most affectionately yours,

"Feb. 24, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr. Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his Lordship wrote to me; "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong

1 A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

desire to be with him; informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE not had your letter half an hour: as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer.

"I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the first of April.

"Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield, before I set out on this long Journey. To this I can only add that I am, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"March 5, 1776."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"VERY early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time; of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day.

"Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes; and mention very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, sir,

"Your faithful servant,

"March 12, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the University of Oxford with the continuation of his History, and such other of his Lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *Manège* in the University. The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr. Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution; the profits arising from the Clarendon press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his ALMA

1 A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

"TO THE REVEREND DR. WETHERELL, MASTER OF UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"DEAR SIR,

"FEW things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr. *******'s letter.

"The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. The complaint[1] which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity; and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of another; for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastick ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

1 I suppose the complaint was, that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.

"To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the publick, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book, is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negociating the sale.

"Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent; we inherit many of our instruments and materials; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

"It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

"We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand; by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted.

"We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I

have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price, ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

"The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great: but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five *per cent.* between six and seven shillings in the pound; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver an hundred and four.

"The profits will then stand thus:

"Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly-book.

"Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly-book if he takes five and twenty, will send it to his country-customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten *per cent.* which is expected in the wholesale trade.

"The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence, and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

"With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

"Thus, dear sir, I have been incited by Dr. *******'s letter to give you a detail of the circula-

tion of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider.

"I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."[1]

"March 12, 1776."

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr. Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson's-court, No. 7, to Bolt-court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet-street. My reflection at the time upon this change as marked in my Journal, is as follows: "I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name;[2] but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination while I trod its pavement, in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr. Thrale's, in the Borough, I hastened thither, and found Mrs. Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs. Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with

1 I am happy in giving this full and clear statement to the publick, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest authour of his age, that respectable body of men, the booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr. Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.

2 He said, when in Scotland, that he was *Johnson of that Ilk.*

great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus*,[1] I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of *mind*." "There are many (she replied) who admire and respect Mr. Johnson; but you and I *love* him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. "But, (said he), before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend, Dr. Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him; being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs. Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity; and said, "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner; of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages, not only to the chief but to his people; an establishment which extends upwards and downwards; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing."

He said, "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country plerieses of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country;

1 See vol. II. p. 25.

for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once?" JOHNSON. "So far, sir, as money produces good, it would be an advantage; for, then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one third, or perhaps one half of the land of a country kept free for commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise: but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground."[1]

1 The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation, is enjoyed by none of his Majesty's subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *fine* and *recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it de-

JOHNSON. "Why, sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt."

I mentioned Dr. Adam Smith's book on "The Wealth of Nations," which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physick. JOHNSON. "He is mistaken, sir: a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer: but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject." I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his 'Commentaries.' But upon the Continent, the great writers on law have not all been in practice: Grotius, indeed, was; but Puffendorf was not, Burlamaqui was not."

pendent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation, to men, who having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The King, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of Parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wrong to stir up law-suits; but when once it is certain that a law-suit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit, rather than another." BOSWELL. "You would not solicit employment, sir, if you were a lawyer." JOHNSON. "No, sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch Militia, in supporting which his Lordship had made an able speech in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topick of conversation.—JOHNSON. "As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest, that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops

are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way, by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia." BOSWELL. "You should not talk of *we* and *you*, sir: there is now an *Union*." JOHNSON. "There must be a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, 'Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep a greater number of militia,' it would be unreasonable." In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land-tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of publick revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.

He thus discoursed upon supposed obligation in settling estates:—"Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it: but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir; there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice, according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance; but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The

right of an heir at law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the King."

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars; and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of "*Johnsoniana, or Bon-Mots* of Dr. Johnson." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing." BOSWELL. "Pray, sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon-mots* do?" JOHNSON. "No, sir; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing?" BOSWELL. "I think, sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, 'Here is a volume which was publickly advertised and came out in Dr. Johnson's own time, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine." JOHNSON. "I shall give myself no trouble about the matter."

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications; but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a

man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe; but it would be a picture of nothing. ******* (naming a worthy friend of ours), used to think a story, a story, till I shewed him that truth was essential to it." I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON. "Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of every body."

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of every thing that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet-street. "A gentlewoman (said he) begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.

We landed at the Temple-stairs, where we parted.

I found him in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal.

There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit: for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said, 'She should remember this as long as she lived.'" I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his "Rambler" and "Idler," he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it.—JOHNSON. "Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to

produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it."

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon this subject: "A man who has been drinking wine at all freely, should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

He allowed very great influence to education. "I do not deny, sir, but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining; yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it: and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

This is a difficult subject; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land."—"Then (said I) it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON. "It would

be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea, before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as indeed is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

On Tuesday, March 19, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr. Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton College, whom we did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger had no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON. "I doubt that, sir." BOSWELL. "Why, sir, he will be Atlas with the burthen off his back." JOHNSON. "But I know not, sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player: he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate." BOSWELL. "I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do." JOHNSON. "Alas, sir! he will soon be a decayed actor himself."

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, "because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility." For the same reason he satirised statuary. "Painting

(said he) consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect; but a fellow will hack half a year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot." Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste; for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhance the value of a marble head, we should consider, that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow. Dr. Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothick attack, and he made a brisk defence. "What, sir, will you allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary? Why should we allow it then in writing? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments." Johnson smiled with complacency; but said, "Why, sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge; and his expression was, "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight

line to the bridge."—"No, sir (said Gwyn), I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way.*" JOHNSON, (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation). "Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this."

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr. Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr. Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, "A man so afflicted, sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." BOSWELL. "May not he think them down, sir?" JOHNSON. "No, sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise." BOSWELL. "Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chymistry?" JOHNSON. "Let him take a course of chymistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of any thing to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind."

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, master of University College, with whom Dr. Johnson con-

ferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL. "I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his 'Political Tracts,' by way of a Discourse on the British Constitution." BOSWELL. "Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each." I could perceive that he was displeased with this dialogue. He burst out, "Why should *I* be always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St. Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentick information, which, with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr. Adams had distinguished himself by an able answer to David Hume's "Essay on Miracles." He told me he had once dined in company with Hume

in London: that Hume shook hands with him, and said, "You have treated me much better than I deserve;" and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classick authour, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber;* he will look upon him as *odious,* though the infidel might think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in the "Beggar's Opera," who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife; but shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him in making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down stairs, or run him through the body; that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An Infidel then shall not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I

think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me, and said, "When a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language." ADAMS. "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*."

Dr. Adams told us, that in some of the Colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON. "They are in the right, sir: there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by; for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL. "But, sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON. "No animated conversation, sir, for it cannot be but one or other will come off superiour. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear: and he to whom he thus shews himself superiour is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said, '*Mallem cùm Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio recte sapere.*' In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Nores' Comments upon Horace, you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right."

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's

garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON, (after a reverie of meditation). "Ay! Here I used to play at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent Whig: but he had been a scoundrel all along to be sure." BOSWELL. "Was he a scoundrel, sir, in any other way than that of being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at draughts?" JOHNSON. "Sir, we never played for *money*."

He then carried me to visit Dr. Bentham, Canon of Christ-Church, and Divinity professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ-Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the Masters and Fellows, it being St. Cuthbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr. Horne, late President of Magdalen College, and Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities, in different respects, the publick has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's Lives, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negociate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON. "In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's

Lives. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a late edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored; and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor."

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr. Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. —JOHNSON. "It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late Bishop, whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his Lordship, could tell me scarcely any thing."[1]

I said, Mr. Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr. Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of "The Muse in Livery." JOHNSON. "I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life; yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'"

1 It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr. Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English; and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase, "*little or nothing;*" i. e. almost so little as to be nothing.

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of the "*Biographia Britannica*." Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, "A Political Survey of Great Britain," as the world had been taught to expect;[1] and had said to me, that he believed Campbell's disappointment on account of the bad success of that work, had killed him. He this evening observed of it, "That work was his death." Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, "I believe so; from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book."

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity. I said it was not fair to attack us unexpectedly; he should have warned us of our danger, before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, "Spring-guns and men-traps set here." The authour had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the Church of England to the Church of Rome,—from the Church of Rome to infidelity,—I did not despair yet of seeing him a methodist preacher. JOHNSON, (laughing.) "It is said, that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it." BOSWELL. "I am not quite sure of that, sir."

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his "Christian Hero," with the avowed purpose of

1 Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed.

obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet, that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable." JOHNSON. "Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices."

Mr. Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson, whether a man's being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON. "No, sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

I censured some ludicrous fantastick dialogues between two coach-horses and other such stuff, which Baretti had lately published. He joined with me, and said, "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation. JOHNSON. "Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another." I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON. "Yes; Burke *is* an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual." It is very pleasing to me to record, that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of Parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said, "Now we who know Mr. Burke, know, that he will be one of the first men in the country." And once, when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to

see Burke now it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, March 21, we set out in a post-chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we rode through Blenheim park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the Epigram made upon it—

> "The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
> The stream, an emblem of his bounty flows:"

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, "They have *drowned* the Epigram." I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us, "You and I, sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild rough island of Mull, and Blenheim park."

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel-house, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house (said he), in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that every body should be easy, in the nature of things it cannot be: there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him: and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome: and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the

more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."[1] He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines:

> "Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn."[2]

My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of Johnson appears in one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb. 9, 1760. "I

1 Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found, in his bulky tome, a very excellent one upon this subject. "In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestick enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.*—'As soon (said he) as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.'"

2 We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines.*

* I give them as they are found in the corrected edition of his Works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza ran thus:

> "Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
> Whate'er his *various tour has* been,
> May sigh to think *how oft* he found
> *His* warmest welcome at an Inn."

have lately been reading one or two volumes of the Rambler; who, excepting against some few hardnesses[1] in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time."

In the afternoon, as we were driven rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me, "Life has not many things better than this."

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classick ground of Shakspeare's native place.

He spoke slightingly of "Dyer's Fleece."—"The subject, sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, THE FLEECE." Having talked of Grainger's "Sugar-Cane," I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus:

"Now, Muse, let's sing of *rats*."

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slily overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified.[2]

1 "He too often makes use of the *abstract* for the *concrete*."

2 Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation:

"The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion; for the authour having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havock made by rats and mice, he in-

This passage does not appear in the printed work. Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem having become sensible that introducing even *rats*, in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea; for they are thus, in a still more ludicrou manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as i now stands:

> "Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin race,
> A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane."

Johnson said, that Dr. Grainger was an agreeable man; a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done; but "The Sugar-Cane, a Poem," did not please him;[1] for, he exclaimed, "What could he make of a sugar-cane? One might as well write the 'Parsley-bed, a Poem;' or 'The Cabbage-garden, a Poem.'" BOSWELL. "You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*." JOHNSON. "You

troduced the subject in a kind of mock heroick, and a parody of Homer's battle of the frogs and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgement, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above-mentioned."

The above was written by the bishop when he had not the Poem itself to recur to; and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet as Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not now apply to the printed poem.

The bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger;—"He was not only a man of genius and learning, but had many excellent virtues; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew."

1 Dr. Johnson said to me, "Percy, sir, was angry with me for laughing at the Sugar-cane: for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger's rats.'

know there is already 'The Hop-Garden, a Poem:' and, I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilized society over a rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them; and one might thus shew how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms." He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr. Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON. "The wolf, sir! why the wolf? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the grey rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see '*The History of the Grey Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D. Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty,*" (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL. "I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the grey rat." JOHNSON. "Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat." Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination, when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. "He had practised physick in various situations with no great emolument. A West-India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of his accompanying him to the West-Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman; but upon the voyage fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition he quarrelled with the

gentleman, and declared he would have no connection with him. So he forfeited the annuity. He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as rival to him in his practice of physick, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island, that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, March 22, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and, after breakfast, went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr. Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us, that, "her master was gone out; he was gone to the country; she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception; and Johnson observed, "She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her, "My name is Johnson; tell him I called. Will you remember the name?" She answered with rustick simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, "I don't understand you, sir."—"Blockhead (said he), I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it.[1] He, however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and

1 My worthy friend Mr. Langton, to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my Johnsonian History, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter, after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife, who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, "I took care to let her know what I thought of her." And being asked, "What did you say?" answered, "I told her she was a *scoundrel*."

roared loud in her ear, "*Johnson,*" and then she catched the sound.

We next called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called Quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me, "After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well." We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimation by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON. "I think it a bad thing; because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character; nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full right of lawful children, by the posteriour consent of the offending parties." His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may, at times, be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother, who is younger than her, gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr. Lloyd joined us in the street; and in a little

while we met *Friend Hector,* as Mr. Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly shewed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their Majesties, and like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, "Marriage is the best state for a man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity; and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

As Dr. Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the Quakers, but not the sect; when we were at Mr. Lloyd's, I kept clear of introducing any questions concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of "Barclay's Apology," Johnson laid hold of it; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism, in the scriptures; that is false." Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner; and the good Quakers had the advantage of him; for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism; which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in a great mistake; for when insisting that the rite of baptism by water was to cease, when the

spiritual administration of CHRIST began, he maintained, that John the Baptist said, "*My baptism* shall decrease, but *his* shall increase." Whereas the words are, "*He* must increase, but I *must* decrease."[1]

One of them having objected to the "observance of days, and months, and years," Johnson answered, "The Church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day, will be neglected."

He said to me at another time, "Sir, the holidays observed by our church are of great use in religion." There can be no doubt of this, in a limited sense; I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr. Nelson's "Festivals and Fasts," which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible, is a most valuable help to devotion; and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject by Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St. Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say, that Scotland is the only Christian country, Catholick or Protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment, on days set apart for the purpose.

Mr. Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr. Bolton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor shewed me himself to the best advantage. I wished Johnson had

1 John iii. 30.

been with us: for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have "matched his mighty mind." I shall never forget Mr. Bolton's expression to me, "I sell here, sir, what all the world desires to have—POWER." He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. "Your landlord is in the right, Smith (said Bolton). But I'll tell you what: find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half; and you shall have your goods again."

From Mr. Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr. Johnson said to me in the morning, "You will see, sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropt out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man can never be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantick fancy.

On our return from Mr. Bolton's, Mr. Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love*; who though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable and well bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their schoolfellows, Mr. Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described: "He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to

go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow, when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial; his conversation is quite monosyllabical; and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was, that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare." When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, "Don't grow like Congreve; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me."

When he again talked of Mrs. Careless to-night, he seemed to have had his affection revived; for he said, "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me." BOSWELL. "Pray, sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular?" JOHNSON. "Ay, sir, fifty thousand." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts." JOHNSON. "To be sure not, sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter."

I wished to have staid at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr. Hector; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city; so we drove

on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now (said he), we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.[1] We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci;* and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in "The Beaux Stratagem," recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs. Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a Captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds; about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She reverenced him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr. Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance, Wilkins, of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir (said

1 I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for February, 1785.

he), I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view, he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked, with surprise, what was the matter, he answered, "*Sh' apprens t'etre fif.*"

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson, one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse grey coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded; and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common; to his indistinct account of which, Dr. Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life; though that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale;* and oat cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant

to me to find, that "*Oats*," the "*food of horses*," were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr. Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy: for they had several provincial sounds; as *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*; *once* pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse*, or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out, "Who's for *poonsh?*"[1]

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place, sail-cloth and streamers for ships; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheepskins: but upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, sir (said I), you are an idle set of people." "Sir (said Johnson), we are a city of philosophers; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands."

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and expressed his

1 [Garrick himself, like the Lichfieldians, always said—*shupreme*, *shuperior*. B.]

[This is still the vulgar pronunciation of Ireland, where the pronunciation of the English language is doubtless that which generally prevailed in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth. M.]

gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON. "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it: there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment too very powerful and very pleasing: but it has not its full proportion in his conversation."

When we were by ourselves, he told me, "Forty years ago, sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora, in 'Hob in the Well.'" What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed; but, if we may believe Mr. Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow;" when in fact according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon *boards*."

We had promised Mr. Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr. Johnson jocularly proposed me to write a Prologue for the occasion: "A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esq. from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, "Prologue, spoken before Dr. Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776;" would have sounded as well as, "Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York, at Oxford," in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr. Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud

of being a relation of Dr. Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press; and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a bookseller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr. Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things; and Mr. Green told me that Johnson once said to him, "Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man of war, as of collecting such a museum." Mr. Green's obliging alacrity in shewing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristical of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat.*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not unreasonable; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh, nobody would employ him; though one may eat horse-flesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would."[1]

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs. Aston, one of the maiden sisters of

1 [Fothergill a Quaker, and Schomberg a Jew, had the greatest practice of any two physicians of their time. B.]

Mrs. Walmsley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

On Sunday, March 24, we breakfasted with Mrs. Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr. Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs. Cobb to St. Mary's church, and I went to the cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the musick, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr. Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying, that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and attempt at mimickry which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr. Johnson went with me to the cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr. Johnson at the Reverend Mr. Seward's, Canon Residentiary, who inhabited the Bishop's palace, in which Mr. Walmsley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr. Seward had, with ecclesiastical hospitality and politeness, asked me in the morning, merely as a stranger, to dine with him;

and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr. Johnson and me to spend the evening and sup with him. He was a genteel, well-bred, dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr. Hunter, Johnson's first schoolmaster. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr. Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanos, from which it appeared, that they were so very different in depth at different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Brydone's entertaining tour, I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr. Johnson, indeed, had said before, independent of this observation, "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the world;—shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this?"

On Monday, March 25, we breakfasted at Mrs. Lucy Porter's. Johnson had sent an express to Dr. Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr. Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he

had read it, he exclaimed, "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." The phrase *my time*, like the word *age*, is usually understood to refer to an event of a publick or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the King —like a gunpowder plot carried into execution—or like another fire of London. When asked, "What is it, sir?" he answered, "Mr. Thrale has lost his only son!" This was, no doubt, a very great affliction to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, which their friends would consider accordingly; but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I, however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe, how Dr. Johnson would be affected. He said, "This is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity." Upon my mentioning that Mr. Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth;—"Daughters (said Johnson, warmly), he'll no more value his daughters than —" I was going to speak.—"Sir (said he), don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said, it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON. "It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think that you feel enough." BOSWELL. "And, sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the mean time; and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated, that they will be capable of being consoled by you, which, in the first violence of it, I believe, would not be the case." JOHNSON. "No, sir; violent pain of mind, like violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt." BOSWELL. "I own, sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others, as some people have, or pretend to

have: but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others, as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, sir; you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy."

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr. Thrale's clerk, and concluded, "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said, "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs. Lucy Porter and some other ladies of the place talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs. Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs. Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house and garden, and pleasure-ground, prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence, adjoining to Lichfield. Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself without any apology: I wondered at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate; I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted: but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend, instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his handwriting: "Mrs. Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr. Boswell's company to dinner at two." I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof how amiable his character was in the opinion of

those who knew him best. I was not informed, till afterwards, that Mrs. Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with Gothick barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree,[1] and, as Dr. Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, on the same authority, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts of our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner, Dr. Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs. Thrale, on the death of her son. I said it would be very distressing to Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON. "No, sir, Thrale will forget it first. *She* has many things that she *may* think of. *He* has many things that he *must* think of." This was a very just remark upon the different effects of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute, "It was said of Augustus, that it would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town-hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw "Theodosius," with "The Stratford Jubilee." I was happy to see Dr. Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I con-

1 See an accurate and animated statement of Mr. Gastrel's barbarity, by Mr. Malone, in a note on "Some account of the Life of William Shakspeare," prefixed to his admirable edition of that Poet's works, vol. i. p. 118.

demned myself for being so, when poor Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON. "You are wrong, sir; twenty years hence Mr. and Mrs. Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, sir, you are to consider, that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself."

Mr. Seward and Mr. Pearson, another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn, and after they left us, we sat up late as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt.

"Marriage, sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman: for he is much less able to supply himself with domestick comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying—the *mechanical* reason." BOSWELL. "Why that *is* a strong one. But does not imagination make it much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, sir; but it is a delusion that is always beginning again." BOSWELL. "I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion." JOHNSON. "I don't think so, sir."

"Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."

"A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion."

"Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to a particular object. By doing so, Norton[1] has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be."

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on publick worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women; maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety."

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties; for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other. Johnson, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this; "Why, sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and

1 [Sir Fletcher Norton, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1782 created Baron Grantley. M.]

which is not so large but they are all known. There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where from its great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England may long remain unknown to each other."

On Tuesday, March 26, there came for us an equipage properly suited to a wealthy well-beneficed clergyman: Dr. Taylor's large, roomy post-chaise, drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postillions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne; where I found my friend's schoolfellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial creditable equipage: his house, garden, pleasure-grounds, table, in short every thing good, and no scantiness appearing. Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely. Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up. I have seen many skeletons of shew and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and good preferment in the church, being a prebendary of Westminster, and rector of Bosworth. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal; and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me, he had, the preceding winter, distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently a considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family; for though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality of any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me, "Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size, and figure, and countenance, and manner, were that of a hearty

English 'Squire, with the parson super-induced: and I took particular notice of his upper-servant, Mr. Peters, a decent grave man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or *major domo* of a bishop.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality; and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow, Congreve, that he had given to Mr. Hector; adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse." Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr. Taylor commended a physician who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." Johnson. "But you should consider, sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for, every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him; whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think, "'We'll send for Dr. ***** nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the publick, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr. Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the judge. "For (said he), either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly, his own consciousness will protect him; if he meant to do injustice, he

will be glad to see the man who attacks him so much vexed."

Next day, as Dr. Johnson had acquainted Dr. Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr. Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of any thing. "Then, sir (said I), the savage is a wise man." "Sir (said he), I do not mean simply being without,—but not having a want." I maintained, against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON. "No, sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not *you*, sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*." I apologised by saying, I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.

Having left Ashbourne in the evening, we stopped to change horses at Derby, and availed ourselves of a moment to enjoy the conversation of my countryman, Dr. Butter, then physician there. He was in great indignation because Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia had been lost. Dr. Johnson was as violent against it. "I am glad (said he) that Parliament has had the spirit to throw it out. You

wanted to take advantage of the timidity of our scoundrels;" (meaning, I suppose, the ministry). It may be observed, that he used the epithet scoundrel, very commonly, not quite in the sense in which it is generally understood, but as a strong term of disapprobation; as when he abruptly answered Mrs. Thrale, who had asked him how he did, "Ready to become a scoundrel, madam; with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal:"[1]—he meant, easy to become a capricious and self-indulgent valetudinarian; a character for which I have heard him express great disgust.

Johnson had with him upon this jaunt, "*Il Palmerino d'Inghilterra*," a romance praised by Cervantes; but did not like it much. He said, he read it for the language, by way of preparation for his Italian expedition.—We lay this night at Loughborough.

On Thursday, March 28, we pursued our journey. I mentioned that old Mr. Sheridan complained of the ingratitude of Mr. Wedderburne and General Fraser, who had been much obliged to him when they were young Scotchmen entering upon life in England. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him. A man when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connections. Then, sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be; and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, every body knows of them." He placed this subject in a new light to me, and shewed,

1 Anecdotes of Johnson, p. 176.

that a man who has risen in the world must not be condemned too harshly, for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them. It is, no doubt, to be wished, that a proper degree of attention should be shewn by great men to their early friends. But if either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not submit even to an exteriour observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed. To one of the very fortunate persons whom I have mentioned, namely, Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, I must do the justice to relate, that I have been assured by another early acquaintance of his, old Mr. Macklin, who assisted in improving his pronunciation, that he found him very grateful. Macklin, I suppose, had not pressed upon his elevation with so much eagerness, as the gentleman who complained of him. Dr. Johnson's remark as to the jealousy entertained of our friends who rise far above us, is certainly very just. By this was withered the early friendship between Charles Townshend and Akenside; and many similar instances might be adduced.

He said, "It is commonly a weak man, who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune; and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionally expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expenses. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously: but a woman who gets the command of money for the

first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret. On the contrary, he was willing to speak favourably of his own age; and, indeed, maintained its superiority in every respect, except in its reverence for government; the relaxation of which he imputed, as its grand cause, to the shock which our monarchy received at the Revolution, though necessary; and secondly, to the timid concessions made to faction by successive administrations in the reign of his present Majesty. I am happy to think, that he lived to see the Crown at last recover its just influence.

At Leicester we read in the news-paper that Dr. James was dead. I thought that the death of an old schoolfellow, and one with whom he had lived a good deal in London, would have affected my fellow-traveller much: but he only said, "Ah! poor Jamy." Afterwards, however, when we were in the chaise, he said, with more tenderness, "Since I set out on this jaunt, I have lost an old friend and a young one;—Dr. James, and poor Harry," (meaning Mr. Thrale's son).

Having lain at St. Alban's, on Thursday, March 28, we breakfasted the next morning at Barnet. I expressed to him a weakness of mind which I could not help; an uneasy apprehension that my wife and children, who were at a great distance from me, might, perhaps, be ill. "Sir (said he), consider how

foolish you would think it in *them* to be apprehensive that *you* are ill." This sudden turn relieved me for the moment; but I afterwards perceived it to be an ingenious fallacy.[1] I might, to be sure, be satisfied that they had no reason to be apprehensive about me, because I *knew* that I myself was well: but we might have a mutual anxiety, without the charge of folly; because each was, in some degree, uncertain as to the condition of the other.

I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. I experienced immediate happiness while whirled along with such a companion, and said to him, "Sir, you observed one day at General Oglethorpe's, that a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk. Will you not add,—or when driving rapidly in a post-chaise?" JOHNSON. "No, sir, you are driving rapidly *from* something, or *to* something."

Talking of melancholy, he said, "Some men, and very thinking men too, have not those vexing thoughts.[2] Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the

1 [Surely it is no fallacy, but a sound and rational argument. He who is perfectly well, and apprehensive concerning the state of another at a distance from him, *knows* to a certainty that the fears of that person concerning *his* health are imaginary and delusive; and hence has a rational ground for supposing that his own apprehensions concerning his absent wife or friend are equally unfounded. M.]

2 The phrase "vexing thoughts," is, I think, very expressive. It has been familiar to me from my childhood; for it is to be found in the "Psalms in Metre," used in the churches (I believe I should say *kirks*) of Scotland, Psal. xliii. v. 5.

> "Why art thou then cast down, my soul?
> What should discourage thee?
> And why with *vexing thoughts* art thou
> Disquieted in me?"

year round. Beauclerk, except when ill and in pain, is the same. But I believe most men have them in the degree in which they are capable of having them. If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book; and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking."

We stopped at Messieurs Dillys, booksellers in the Poultry; from whence he hurried away, in a hackney coach, to Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. I called at his house in the evening, having promised to acquaint Mrs. Williams of his safe return; when, to my surprise, I found him sitting with her at tea, and, as I thought, not in a very good humour: for, it seems, when he had got to Mr. Thrale's, he found the coach was at the door waiting to carry Mrs. and Miss Thrale, and Signor Baretti, their Italian master, to Bath. This was not shewing the attention which might have been expected to the "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend;" the *Imlac* who had hastened from the country to console a distressed mother, who he understood was very anxious for his return. They had, I found, without ceremony, proceeded on their intended journey. I was glad to understand from him that it was still resolved that his tour to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale should take place, of which he had entertained some doubt, on account of the loss which they had suffered; and his doubts afterwards appeared to be well-founded. He observed, indeed very justly, that "their loss was an additional reason

Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossession. But at a maturer period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms, I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland, is, upon the whole, the best; and that it is vain to think of having a better. It has in general a simplicity and *unction* of sacred Poesy; and in many parts its transfusion is admirable.

for their going abroad; and if it had not been fixed that he should have been one of the party, he would force them out; but he would not advise them unless his advice was asked, lest they might suspect that he recommended what he wished on his own account." I was not pleased that his intimacy with Mr. Thrale's family, though it no doubt contributed much to his comfort and enjoyment, was not without some degree of restraint: not, as has been grossly suggested, that it was required of him as a task to talk for the entertainment of them and their company; but that he was not quite at his ease; which, however, might partly be owing to his own honest pride—that dignity of mind which is always jealous of appearing too compliant.

On Sunday, March 31, I called on him, and shewed him as a curiosity which I had discovered, his "Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia," which Sir John Pringle had lent me, it being then little known as one of his works. He said, "Take no notice of it," or "don't talk of it." He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. I said to him, "Your style, sir, is much improved since you translated this." He answered with a sort of triumphant smile, "Sir, I hope it is."

On Wednesday, April 3, in the morning I found him very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

I gave him an account of a conversation which had passed between me and Captain Cook, the day before, at dinner at Sir John Pringle's; and he was much pleased with the conscientious accuracy of that cele-

brated circumnavigator, who set me right as to many of the exaggerated accounts given by Dr. Hawkesworth of his Voyages. I told him that while I was with the Captain, I catched the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a man *does* feel so, till he considers how very little he can learn from such voyages." BOSWELL. "But one is carried away with the general grand and indistinct notion of A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, but a man is to guard himself against taking a thing in general." I said I was certain that a great part of what we are told by the travellers to the South Sea must be conjecture, because they had not enough of the language of those countries to understand so much as they have related. Objects falling under the observation of the senses might be clearly known; but every thing intellectual, every thing abstract—politicks, morals, and religion, must be darkly guessed. Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. He upon another occasion, when a friend mentioned to him several extraordinary facts, as communicated to him by the circumnavigators, slily observed, "Sir, I never before knew how much I was respected by these gentlemen; they told *me* none of these things."

He had been in company with Omai, a native of one of the South Sea Islands, after he had been some time in this country. He was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: "Sir, he had passed his time, while in England, only in the best company; so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel. As a proof of this, sir, Lord Mulgrave and he dined one day at Streatham; they sat with their backs to the light fronting me, so that I could not see distinctly; and there was so little of the savage in Omai, that I was

afraid to speak to either, lest I should mistake one for the other."

We agreed to dine to-day at the Mitre-tavern, after the rising of the House of Lords, where a branch of the litigation concerning the Douglas Estate, in which I was one of the counsel, was to come on. I brought with me Mr. Murray, Solicitor-General of Scotland, now one of the Judges of the Court of Session, with the title of Lord Henderland. I mentioned Mr. Solicitor's relation, Lord Charles Hay, with whom I knew Dr. Johnson had been acquainted. JOHNSON. "I wrote something for Lord Charles; and I thought he had nothing to fear from a court-martial. I suffered a great loss when he died; he was a mighty pleasing man in conversation, and a reading man. The character of a soldier is high. They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind. An officer is much more respected than any other man who has as little money. In a commercial country, money will always purchase respect. But you find, an officer, who has, properly speaking, no money, is every where well received and treated with attention. The character of a soldier always stands him in stead." BOSWELL. "Yet, sir, I think that common soldiers are worse thought of than other men in the same rank of life; such as labourers." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, a common soldier, is usually a very gross man, and any quality which procures respect may be overwhelmed by grossness. A man of learning may be so vicious or so ridiculous that you cannot respect him. A common soldier, too, generally eats more than he can pay for. But when a common soldier is civil in his quarters, his red coat procures him a degree of respect." The peculiar respect paid to the military character in France was mentioned. BOSWELL. "I should think that where military men are so numer-

ous, they would be less valued as not being rare." JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, wherever a particular character or profession is high in the estimation of a people, those who are of it will be valued above other men. We value an Englishman high in this country, and yet Englishmen are not rare in it."

Mr. Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candour and good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON. "Sir, they disputed with good humour, because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their Gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the Poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with good humour upon the fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them: when a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. Accordingly you see in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoick, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value, is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believed in revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question; because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact." MURRAY. "It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him." JOHNSON. "Why, sir; to be sure when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were

to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterwards. No, sir; every man will dispute with great good humour upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of another man's son being hanged; but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in a very good humour with him." I added this illustration, "If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I place great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY. "But, sir, truth will always bear an examination." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week."

We talked of education at great schools; the advantages and disadvantages of which Johnson displayed in a luminous manner; but his arguments preponderated so much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them, that I have reason to believe Mr. Murray was very much influenced by what he had heard to-day, in his determination to send his own son to Westminster school.—I have acted in the same manner with regard to my own two sons; having placed the eldest at Eton, and the second at Westminster. I cannot say which is best. But in justice to both those noble seminaries, I with high satisfaction declare, that my boys have derived from them a great deal of good, and no evil: and I trust they will, like Horace, be

grateful to their father for giving them so valuable an education.

I introduced the topick, which is often ignorantly urged, that the Universities of England are too rich;[1] so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do, if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income. JOHNSON. "Sir, the very reverse of this is the truth; the English Universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit him for the world, and accordingly in general they are held no longer than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a fellow who grows old in his college; but this is against his will, unless he be a man very indolent indeed. A hundred a year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently as a scholar. We do not allow our fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor, that a fellow can obtain any thing more than a livelihood. To be sure a man, who has enough without teaching, will probably not teach; for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner, a man who is to get nothing by teaching, will not exert himself. Gresham-College was intended as a place of instruction for London; able professors were to read lectures gratis, they contrived to have no scholars; whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but sixpence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Every

1 Dr. Adam Smith, who was for some time a professor in the University of Glasgow, has uttered, in his "Wealth of Nations," some reflections upon this subject which are certainly not well founded, and seem to be invidious.

body will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach to have scholars; and this is the case in our Universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true; for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning with them for his life. In the foreign Universities a professorship is a high thing. It is as much almost as a man can make by his learning; and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the Universities. It is not so with us. Our Universities are impoverished of learning, by the penury of their provisions. I wish there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford, to keep first-rate men of learning from quitting the University." Undoubtedly if this were the case, Literature would have a still greater dignity and splendour at Oxford, and there would be grander living sources of instruction.

I mentioned Mr. Maclaurin's uneasiness on account of a degree of ridicule carelessly thrown on his deceased father, in Goldsmith's "History of Animated Nature," in which that celebrated mathematician is represented as being subject to fits of yawning so violent as to render him incapable of proceeding in his lecture; a story altogether unfounded, but for the publication of which the law would give no reparation.[1] This led us to agitate the question, whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication. Mr. Murray maintained there should be reparation, unless the authour could justify himself by proving the fact. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told, than that in-

1 Dr. Goldsmith was dead before Mr. Maclaurin discovered the ludicrous errour. But Mr. Nourse, the bookseller, who was the proprietor of the work, upon being applied to by Sir John Pringle, agreed very handsomely to have the leaf on which it was contained cancelled, and re-printed without it, at his own expense.

dividuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to a man who is calumniated in his life-time, because he may be hurt in his worldly interest, or at least hurt in his mind: but the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice. Let him deny what is said, and let the matter have a fair chance by discussion. But if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written; for a great deal is known of men of which proof cannot be brought. A minister may be notoriously known to take bribes, and yet you may not be able to prove it." Mr. Murray suggested, that the authour should be obliged to shew some sort of evidence, though he would not require a strict legal proof: but Johnson firmly and resolutely opposed any restraint whatever, as adverse to a free investigation of the characters of mankind.[1]

1 What Doctor Johnson has here said, is undoubtedly good sense: yet I am afraid that law, though defined by *Lord Coke* "the perfection of reason," is not altogether *with him;* for it is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man, may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is, however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect. In the King's Bench, Trinity Term, 1790, the question occurred on occasion of an indictment, *The King* v. *Topham*, who, as a *proprietor* of a newspaper entitled "THE WORLD," was found guilty of a libel against Earl Cowper, deceased, because certain injurious charges against his Lordship were published in that paper. An arrest of judgement having been moved for, the case was afterwards solemnly argued. My friend Mr. Const, whom I delight in having an opportunity to praise, not only for his abilities but his manners; a gentleman whose ancient German blood has been mellowed in England, and who may be truly said to unite the *Baron* and the *Barrister*, was one of the Counsel for Mr. Topham. He displayed much learning and ingenuity upon the general question; which, however, was not decided, as the Court granted an arrest chiefly on the informality of

On Thursday, April 4, having called on Dr. Johnson, I said, it was a pity that truth was not so firm as to bid defiance to all attacks, so that it might be shot at as much as people chose to attempt, and yet remain unhurt. JOHNSON. "Then, sir, it would not be shot at. Nobody attempts to dispute that two and two make four: but with contest sconcerning moral truth, human passions are generally mixed, and

the indictment. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England than I have; but, with all deference, I cannot help thinking, that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless Juries, whom I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, resolutely interpose. Of late an act of Parliament has passed declaratory of their full right to one as well as the other, in matter of libel; and the bill having been brought in by a popular gentleman, many of his party have in most extravagant terms declaimed on the wonderful acquisition to the liberty of the press. For my own part I ever was clearly of opinion that this right was inherent in the very constitution of a Jury, and indeed in sense and reason inseparable from their important function. To establish it, therefore, by statute, is, I think, narrowing its foundation, which is the broad and deep basis of Common Law. Would it not rather weaken the right of primogeniture, or any other old and universally-acknowledged right, should the legislature pass an act in favour of it? In my "Letter to the People of Scotland, against diminishing the number of the Lords of Session," published in 1785, there is the following passage, which, as a concise, and I hope a fair and rational state of the matter, I presume to quote: "The Juries of England are Judges of *law* as well as of *fact* in *many civil*, and in *all criminal* trials. That my principles of *resistance* may not be misapprehended any more than my principles of *submission*, I protest that I should be the last man in the world to encourage Juries to contradict rashly, wantonly, or perversely, the opinion of the Judges. On the contrary, I would have them listen respectfully to the advice they receive from the Bench, by which they may often be well directed in forming *their own opinion;* which, 'and not another's,' is the opinion they are to return *upon their oaths.* But where, after due attention to all that the Judge has said, they are decidedly of a different opinion from him, they have not only a *power* and a *right*, but they are *bound in conscience* to bring in a verdict accordingly."

therefore it must ever be liable to assault and misrepresentation."

On Friday, April 5, being Good Friday, after having attended the morning service at St. Clement's church, I walked home with Johnson. We talked of the Roman Catholick religion. JOHNSON. "In the barbarous ages, sir, priests and people were equally deceived; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgences to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted." He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome. BOSWELL. "So then, sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes?" JOHNSON. "To be sure I would not, sir. I would punish it much more than it is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft; but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage."

I stated to him this case:—"Suppose a man has a daughter, who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world; should he keep her in his house? Would he not, by doing so, be accessary to imposition? And, perhaps, a worthy, unsuspecting man might come and marry this woman, unless the father inform him of the truth." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is accessary to no imposition. His daughter

is in his house; and if a man courts her, he takes his chance. If a friend, or, indeed, if any man asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he ought to advise him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider the state of life is this; we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can; and a man is not bound in honesty or honour, to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his friend's daughter is not obliged to say to every body—"Take care of me; don't let me into your house without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter. I may debauch yours."

Mr. Thrale called upon him, and appeared to bear the loss of his son with a manly composure. There was no affectation about him; and he talked, as usual, upon indifferent subjects. He seemed to me to hesitate as to the intended Italian tour, on which, I flattered myself, he and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson were soon to set out; and, therefore, I pressed it as much as I could. I mentioned that Mr. Beauclerk had said, that Baretti, whom they were to carry with them, would keep them so long in the little towns of his own district, that they would not have time to see Rome. I mentioned this to put them on their guard. JOHNSON. "Sir, we do not thank Mr. Beauclerk for supposing that we are to be directed by Baretti. No, sir; Mr. Thrale is to go by my advice, to Mr. Jackson[1] (the all-knowing), and get from him a plan for seeing the most that can be seen in the time that we have to travel. We must, to be sure, see Rome,

1 A gentleman, who from his extraordinary stores of knowledge, has been styled *omniscient*. Johnson, I think very properly, altered it to all-knowing, as it is a *verbum solenne*, appropriated to the Supreme Being.

Naples, Florence, and Venice, and as much more as we can." (Speaking with a tone of animation).

When I expressed an earnest wish for his remarks on Italy, he said, "I do not see that I could make a book upon Italy; yet I should be glad to get two hundred pounds, or five hundred pounds, by such a work." This shewed both that a journal of his Tour upon the Continent was not wholly out of his contemplation, and that he uniformly adhered to that strange opinion which his indolent disposition made him utter: "No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money." Numerous instances to refute this will occur to all who are versed in the history of literature.

He gave us one of the many sketches of character which were treasured in his mind, and which he was wont to produce quite unexpectedly in a very entertaining manner. "I lately (said he) received a letter from the East Indies, from a gentleman whom I formerly knew very well; he had returned from that country with a handsome fortune, as it was reckoned, before means were found to acquire those immense sums which have been brought from thence of late; he was a scholar, and an agreeable man, and lived very prettily in London, till his wife died. After her death, he took to dissipation and gaming, and lost all he had. One evening he lost a thousand pounds to a gentleman whose name I am sorry I have forgotten. Next morning he sent the gentleman five hundred pounds, with an apology that it was all he had in the world. The gentleman sent the money back to him, declaring he would not accept of it; and adding, that if Mr. ——— had occasion for five hundred pounds more, he would lend it to him. He resolved to go out again to the East Indies, and make his fortune anew. He got a considerable appointment, and I had some intention of accompanying him.

Had I thought then as I do now, I should have gone: but at that time, I had objections to quitting England."

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong, yet nice portraits which he often drew. I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonnée* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment. The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation was not less pleasing than surprising. I remember he once observed to me, "It is wonderful, sir, what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week."[1]

1 This Mr. Ellis was, I believe, the last of that profession called *Scriveners*, which is one of the London companies, but of which the business is no longer carried on separately, but is transacted by attornies and others. He was a man of literature and talents. He was the authour of a Hudibrastick version of Maphæus's Canto, in addition to the Æneid; of some poems in Dodsley's collections; and various other small pieces; but being a very modest man, never put his name to any thing. He shewed me a translation which he had made of Ovid's Epistles, very prettily done. There is a good engraved portrait of him by Pether, from a picture by Fry, which hangs in the hall of the Scriveners' company. I visited him October 4, 1790, in his ninety-third year, and found his judgement distinct and clear, and his memory, though faded so as to fail him occasionally, yet, as he assured me, and I indeed perceived, able to serve him very well, after a little recollection. It was agreeable to observe, that he was free from the discontent and fretfulness

Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot; and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote "The Polite Philosopher," and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levett; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr. Sastres, the Italian master; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven,[1] and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner, the tallow-chandler, on Snow-hill.

On my expressing my wonder at his discovering so much of the knowledge peculiar to different professions, he told me, "I learnt what I know of law chiefly from Mr. Ballow,[2] a very able man. I learnt some too from Chambers; but was not so teachable then. One is not willing to be taught by a young man." When I expressed a wish to know more about Mr. Ballow, Johnson said, "Sir, I have seen him but once these twenty years. The tide of life has driven

which too often molest old age. He in the summer of that year walked to Rotherhithe, where he dined, and walked home in the evening. He died on the 31st of December, 1791.

1 Lord Macartney, who, with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for an elegant pleasantry, told me that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference: "So (said his Lordship, smiling), *I kept back.*"

2 There is an account of him in Sir John Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 244.

[Mr. Thomas Ballow was authour of an excellent TREATISE OF EQUITY, printed anonymously in 1742, and lately republished with very valuable additions, by John Fonblanque, Esq.

Mr. Ballow died suddenly in London, July 26, 1782, aged seventy-five, and is mentioned in the Gentleman's Magazine for that year as "a great Greek Scholar, and famous for his knowledge of the old philosophy." M.]

us different ways." I was sorry at the time to hear this; but whoever quits the creeks of private connections, and fairly gets into the great ocean of London, will, by imperceptible degrees, unavoidably experience such cessations of acquaintance.

"My knowledge of physick (he added) I learnt from Dr. James, whom I helped in writing the proposals for his Dictionary, and also a little in the Dictionary itself.[1] I also learnt from Dr. Lawrence, but was then grown more stubborn."

A curious incident happened to-day, while Mr. Thrale and I sat with him. Francis announced that a large packet was brought to him from the post-office, said to have come from Lisbon, and it was charged *seven pounds ten shillings*. He would not receive it, supposing it to be some trick, nor did he even look at it. But upon inquiry afterwards he found that it was a real packet for him, from that very friend in the East Indies of whom he had been speaking; and the ship which carried it having come to Portugal, this packet, with others, had been put into the post-office at Lisbon.

I mentioned a new gaming-club, of which Mr. Beauclerk had given me an account, where the members played to a desperate extent. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, sir, this is mere talk. *Who* is ruined by gaming? You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play: whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it." THRALE. "There may be few people absolutely ruined by deep play; but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, and so are very many by other

1 I have in vain endeavoured to find out what parts Johnson wrote for Dr. James. Perhaps medical men may.

kinds of expense." I had heard him talk once before in the same manner; and at Oxford he said, "he wished he had learned to play at cards." The truth, however, is, that he loved to display his ingenuity in argument; and therefore would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reasoning and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin thus: "Why, sir, as to the good or evil of card-playing—" "Now (said Garrick) he is thinking which side he shall take." He appeared to have a pleasure in contradiction, especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an air of confidence; so that there was hardly any topick, if not one of the great truths of religion and morality, that he might not have been incited to argue, either for or against. Lord Elibank[1] had the highest admiration of his powers. He once observed to me, "Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will not say that he convinces me; but he never fails to shew me, that he has good reasons for it." I have heard Johnson pay his Lordship this high compliment:

"I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something."

We sat together till it was too late for the afternoon service. Thrale said, he had come with intention to go to church with us. We went at seven to evening prayers at St. Clement's church, after having drank coffee; an indulgence, which I understood Johnson yielded to on this occasion, in compliment to Thrale.

On Sunday, April 7, Easter-day, after having been at St. Paul's cathedral, I came to Dr. Johnson, according to my usual custom. It seemed to me, that there was always something peculiarly mild and

1 Patrick, Lord Elibank, who died in 1778.

placid in his manner upon this holy festival, the commemoration of the most joyful event in the history of our world, the resurrection of our LORD and SAVIOUR, who, having triumphed over death and the grave, proclaimed immortality to mankind.

I repeated to him an argument of a lady of my acquaintance, who maintained that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal. JOHNSON. "This is miserable stuff, sir. To the contract of marriage, besides the man and wife, there is a third party—Society; and if it be considered as a vow—GOD: and, therefore, it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for men in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband; but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. A man may be unhappy, because he is not so rich as another; but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand." BOSWELL. "But, sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved; she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know, sir, what Macrobius has told of Julia."[1] JOHNSON. "This lady of yours, sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel."

Mr. Macbean, authour of the "Dictionary of Ancient Geography," came in. He mentioned that he had been forty years absent from Scotland. "Ah, Boswell! (said Johnson, smiling), what would you give to be forty years from Scotland?" I said, "I should not like to be so long absent from the seat of

1 "*Nunquam enim nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem.*" Lib. ii. c. vi.

my ancestors." This gentleman, Mrs. Williams, and Mr. Levett, dined with us.

Dr. Johnson made a remark, which both Mr. Macbean and I thought new. It was this: that "the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as debtors; for if there were no such check, people would be apt, from the temptation of great interest, to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their fortunes for high annuities, which, after a few years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

Mrs. Williams was very peevish; and I wondered at Johnson's patience with her now, as I had often done on similar occasions. The truth is, that his humane consideration of the forlorn and indigent state in which this lady was left by her father, induced him to treat her with the utmost tenderness, and even to be desirous of procuring her amusement, so as sometimes to incommode many of his friends, by carrying her with him to their houses, where, from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.

After coffee, we went to afternoon service in St. Clement's church. Observing some beggars in the street as we walked along, I said to him I supposed there was no civilised country in the world, where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented. JOHNSON. "I believe, sir, there is not; but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality."

When the service was ended, I went home with him, and we sat quietly by ourselves. He recom-

mended Dr. Cheyne's books. I said, I thought Cheyne had been reckoned whimsical.—"So he was (said he), in some things; but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objection or other may not be made." He added, "I would not have you read any thing else of Cheyne, but his book on Health, and his 'English Malady.'"

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness? JOHNSON. "No, sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgencies."

On Wednesday, April 10, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where were Mr. Murphy and some other company. Before dinner, Dr. Johnson and I passed some time by ourselves. I was sorry to find it was now resolved that the proposed journey to Italy should not take place this year. He said, "I am disappointed, to be sure; but it is not a great disappointment." I wondered to see him bear, with a philosophical calmness, what would have made most people peevish and fretful. I perceived, however, that he had so warmly cherished the hope of enjoying classical scenes, that he could not easily part with the scheme; for he said, "I shall probably contrive to get to Italy some other way. But I won't mention it to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, as it might vex them." I suggested, that going to Italy might have done Mr. and Mrs. Thrale good. JOHNSON. "I rather believe not, sir. While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it."

At dinner, Mr. Murphy entertained us with the history of Mr. Joseph Simpson, a schoolfellow of Dr. Johnson's, a barrister at law, of good parts, but who fell into a dissipated course of life, incompatible with that success in his profession which he once had, and would otherwise have deservedly maintained; yet he still preserved a dignity in his deportment. He wrote a tragedy on the story of Leonidas, entitled "The Patriot." He read it to a company of lawyers, who found so many faults that he wrote it over again: so then there were two tragedies on the same subject and with the same title. Dr. Johnson told us, that one of them was still in his possession. This very piece was, after his death, published by some person who had been about him, and, for the sake of a little hasty profit, was fallaciously advertised, so as to make it be believed to have been written by Johnson himself.

I said, I disliked the custom which some people had of bringing their children into company, because it in a manner forced us to pay foolish compliments to please their parents. JOHNSON. "You are right, sir. We may be excused for not caring much about other people's children, for there are many who care very little about their own children. It may be observed, that men, who from being engaged in business, or from their course of life in whatever way, seldom see their children, do not care much about them. I myself should not have had much fondness for a child of my own." MRS. THRALE. "Nay, sir, how can you talk so?" JOHNSON. "At least, I never wished to have a child."

Mr. Murphy mentioned Dr. Johnson's having a design to publish an edition of Cowley. Johnson said, he did not know but he should; and he expressed his disapprobation of Dr. Hurd, for having published a mutilated edition under the title of

"Select Works of Abraham Cowley." Mr. Murphy thought it a bad precedent; observing, that any authour might be used in the same manner; and that it was pleasing to see the variety of an authour's compositions, at different periods.

We talked of Flatman's Poems; and Mrs. Thrale observed, that Pope had partly borrowed from him, "The dying Christian to his Soul." Johnson repeated Rochester's verses upon Flatman, which I think by much too severe:

> "Nor that slow drudge in swift Pindarick strains,
> Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains,
> And rides a jaded Muse, whipt with loose reins."

I like to recollect all the passages that I heard Johnson repeat: it stamps a value on them.

He told us, that the book entitled "The Lives of the Poets, by Mr. Cibber," was entirely compiled by Mr. Shiels,[1] a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. "The booksellers (said he) gave Theophilus Cibber,

1 In the Monthly Review for May, 1792, there is such a correction of the above passage, as I should think myself very culpable not to subjoin. "This account is very inaccurate. The following statement of facts we know to be true, in every material circumstance:—Shiels was the principal collector and digester of the materials for the work: but as he was very raw in authourship, an indifferent writer in prose, and his language full of Scotticisms, Cibber, who was a clever, lively fellow, and then soliciting employment among the booksellers, was engaged to correct the style and diction of the whole work, then intended to make only four volumes, with power to alter, expunge, or add, as he liked. He was also to supply *notes*, occasionally, especially concerning those dramatick poets with whom he had been chiefly conversant. He also engaged to write several of the Lives; which (as we are told) he accordingly performed. He was farther useful in striking out the Jacobitical and Tory sentiments, which Shiels had industriously interspersed wherever he could bring them in:—and as the success of the work appeared, after all, very doubtful, he was content with twenty-one pounds for his labour, besides a few sets of the books to disperse among his friends.—Shiels had nearly seventy

who was then in prison, ten guineas, to allow *Mr. Cibber* to be put upon the title-page, as the authour; by this, a double imposition was intended: in the

pounds, beside the advantage of many of the best Lives in the work being communicated by friends to the undertaking; and for which Mr. Shiels had the same consideration as for the rest, being paid by the sheet, for the whole. He was, however, so angry with his Whiggish supervisor, (THE. like his father, being a violent stickler for the political principles which prevailed in the reign of George the Second), for so unmercifully mutilating his copy, and scouting his politicks, that he wrote Cibber a challenge: but was prevented from sending it by the publisher, who fairly laughed him out of his fury. The proprietors, too, were discontented, in the end, on account of Mr. Cibber's unexpected industry; for his corrections and alterations in the proof sheets were so numerous and considerable, that the printer made for them a grievous addition to his bill; and, in fine, all parties were dissatisfied. On the whole, the work was productive of no profit to the undertakers, who had agreed, in case of success, to make Cibber a present of some addition to the twenty guineas which he had received, and for which his receipt is now in the booksellers' hands. We are farther assured, that he actually obtained an additional sum; when he, soon after (in the year 1758), unfortunately embarked for Dublin, on an engagement for one of the theatres there: but the ship was cast away, and every person on board perished. There were about sixty passengers, among whom was the Earl of Drogheda, with many other persons of consequence and property.

"As to the alleged design of making the compilement pass for the work of old Mr. Cibber, the charges seem to have been founded on a somewhat uncharitable construction. We are assured that the thought was not harboured by some of the proprietors, who are still living; and we hope that it did not occur to the first designer of the work, who was also the printer of it, and who bore a respectable character.

"We have been induced to enter thus circumstantially into the foregoing detail of facts relating to the Lives of the Poets, compiled by Messrs. Cibber and Shiels, from a sincere regard to that sacred principle of Truth, to which Dr. Johnson so rigidly adhered, according to the best of his knowledge; and which, we believe, *no consideration* would have prevailed on him to violate. In regard to the matter, which we now dismiss, he had, no doubt, been misled by partial and wrong information: Shiels was the Doctor's amanuensis; he had quarrelled with Cibber; it is natural

first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all; and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber."

Mr. Murphy said, that "The Memoirs of Gray's Life set him much higher in his estimation than his poems did; for you there saw a man constantly at work in literature." Johnson acquiesced in this; but depreciated the book, I thought very unreasonably. For he said, "I forced myself to read it, only because it was a common topick of conversation. I found it mighty dull; and, as to the style, it is fit for the second table." Why he thought so I was at a loss to conceive. He now gave it as his opinion, that "Akenside was a superiour poet both to Gray and Mason."

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said, "I think them very impartial: I do not know an instance of partiality." He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the Monthly and Critical Reviews, in the conversation with which his Majesty had honoured him. He expatiated a little more on them this evening. "The Monthly Reviewers (said he) are not Deists; but they are Christians with as little christianity as may be; and are for pulling down all establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for sup-

to suppose that he told his story in his own way; and it is certain that *he* was not 'a very sturdy moralist.'" This explanation appears to me very satisfactory. It is, however, to be observed, that the story told by Johnson does not rest solely upon my record of his conversation; for he himself has published it in his life of Hammond, where he says, "the manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession." Very probably he had trusted to Shiels's word, and never looked at it so as to compare it with "The Lives of the Poets," as published under Mr. Cibber's name. What became of that manuscript I know not. I should have liked much to examine it. I suppose it was thrown into the fire in that impetuous combustion of papers, which Johnson I think rashly executed, when *moribundus*.

porting the constitution both in church and state.[1] The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through; but lay hold of a topick, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

He talked of Lord Lyttelton's extreme anxiety as an authour; observing, that "he was thirty years in preparing his History, and that he employed a man to point it for him; as if (laughing) another man could point his sense better than himself." Mr. Murphy said, he understood his history was kept back several years for fear of Smollett. JOHNSON. "This seems strange to Murphy and me, who never felt that anxiety, but sent what we wrote to the press, and let it take its chance." MRS. THRALE. "The time has been, sir, when you felt it." JOHNSON. "Why really, madam, I do not recollect a time when that was the case."

Talking of "The Spectator," he said, "It is wonderful that there is such a proportion of bad papers in the half of the work which was not written by Addison; for there was all the world to write that half, yet not a half of that half is good. One of the finest pieces in the English language is the paper on Novelty, yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove, a dissenting *teacher*." He would not, I perceived, call him a *clergyman*, though he was candid enough to allow very great merit to his composition. Mr. Murphy said, he remembered when there were several people alive in London, who enjoyed a considerable reputation merely from having written a paper in "The Spectator." He mentioned particularly Mr. Ince, who used to frequent Tom's

1 [Johnson's opinions concerning the Monthly and Critical Reviews would not be accurate now [1803.] B.]

coffee-house. "But (said Johnson) you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr. Ince." He would not allow that the paper on carrying a boy to travel, signed *Philip Homebred*, which was reported to be written by the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, had merit. He said, "it was quite vulgar, and had nothing luminous."

Johnson mentioned Dr. Barry's[1] System of Physick. "He was a man (said he) who had acquired a high reputation in Dublin, came over to England, and brought his reputation with him, but had not great success. His notion was, that pulsation occasions death by attrition; and that, therefore, the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation. But we know that pulsation is strongest in infants, and that we increase in growth while it operates in its regular course; so it cannot be the cause of destruction." Soon after this, he said something very flattering to Mrs. Thrale, which I do not recollect; but it concluded with wishing her long life. "Sir (said I), if Dr. Barry's system be true, you have now shortened Mrs. Thrale's life, perhaps, some minutes, by accelerating her pulsation."

On Thursday, April 11, I dined with him at General Paoli's, in whose house I now resided, and where I had ever afterwards the honour of being entertained with the kindest attention as his constant guest, while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there. I mentioned my having that morning introduced to Mr. Garrick, Count Neni, a Flemish nobleman of great rank and fortune, to whom Garrick talked of Abel Drugger as *a small part;* and related, with pleasant vanity, that a Frenchman who had seen him in one of his low characters, exclaimed, "*Comment! je ne le crois pas.*

1 Sir Edward Barry, Baronet.

Ce n'est pas Monsieur Garrick, ce grand homme!" Garrick added, with an appearance of grave recollection, "If I were to begin life again, I think I should not play those low characters." Upon which I observed, "Sir, you would be in the wrong; for your great excellence is your variety of playing, your representing so well characters so very different." JOHNSON. "Garrick, sir, was not in earnest in what he said; for, to be sure, his peculiar excellence is his variety; and, perhaps, there is not any one character which has not been as well acted by somebody else, as he could do it." BOSWELL. "Why then, sir, did he talk so?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, to make you answer as you did." BOSWELL. "I don't know, sir; he seemed to dip deep into his mind for the reflection." JOHNSON. "He had not far to dip, sir: he had said the same thing, probably, twenty times before."

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office, he said, "His parts, sir, are pretty well for a Lord; but would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said, "A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great Empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.—All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed, that "THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem."

We talked of translation. I said, I could not define it, nor could I think of a similitude to illustrate it;

but that it appeared to me the translation of poetry could be only imitation. JOHNSON. "You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language."

A gentleman maintained that the art of printing had hurt real learning, by disseminating idle writings. —JOHNSON. "Sir, if it had not been for the art of printing, we should now have no learning at all; for books would have perished faster than they could have been transcribed." This observation seems not just, considering for how many ages books were preserved by writing alone.[1]

The same gentleman maintained, that a general diffusion of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage; for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere. JOHNSON. "Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first; but we see when reading and writing have become general, the common people keep their stations. And so, were higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same."

1 [The authour did not recollect that of the books preserved (and an infinite number was lost) all were confined to two languages. In modern times and modern languages, France and Italy alone produce more books in a given time than Greece and Rome; put England, Spain, Germany, and the Northern kingdoms out of the question. B.]

"Goldsmith (he said) referred every thing to vanity; his virtues, and his vices too, were from that motive. He was not a social man. He never exchanged mind with you."

We spent the evening at Mr. Hoole's. Mr. Mickle, the excellent translator of "The Lusiad," was there. I have preserved little of the conversation of this evening. Dr. Johnson said, "Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing every thing in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes, that the sense can hardly peep through. Shiels, who compiled 'Cibber's Lives of the Poets,'[1] was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson, and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked,—Is not this fine? Shiels having expressed the highest admiration. Well, sir (said I), I have omitted every other line."

I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr. Robert Dodsley, one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762. Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own Collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a palace like Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," you had villages composed of very pretty houses; and he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." JOHNSON. "I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did; for he acknowledged that there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. 'Hudibras' has a profusion of these; yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. 'The Spleen,' in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry." BOSWELL.

1 See *ante*, Note, p. 223, &c.

"Does not Gray's poetry, sir, tower above the common mark?" JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; but we must attend to the difference between what men in general cannot do if they would, and what every man may do if he would. Sixteen-string Jack[1] towered above the common mark." BOSWELL. "Then, sir, what is poetry?" JOHNSON. "Why, sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all *know* what light is; but it is not easy to *tell* what it is."

On Friday, April 12, I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr. Cradock, of Leicestershire, authour of "Zobeide," a tragedy; a very pleasing gentleman, to whom my friend Dr. Farmer's very excellent Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare is addressed; and Dr. Harwood, who has written and published various works; particularly a fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist.

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine in his "Art of Poetry," of "the καθαρσις των παθηματων, the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy.[2] "But how are the passions to be purged by terrour and pity?" (said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address). JOHNSON. "Why, sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense. It is to expel impurities from the human body. The mind is subject to the same imperfection. The passions are the great movers of human actions; but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged

1 A noted highwayman, who after having been several times tried and acquitted, was at last hanged. He was remarkable for foppery in his dress, and particularly for wearing a bunch of sixteen strings at the knees of his breeches.

2 See an ingenious Essay on this subject by the late Dr. Moor, Greek professor at Glasgow.

or refined by means of terrour and pity. For instance, ambition is a noble passion; but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice, is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion. In the same manner a certain degree of resentment is necessary; but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion." My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr. Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"

I observed the great defect of the tragedy of "Othello" was, that it had not a moral; for that no man could resist the circumstances of suspicion which were artfully suggested to Othello's mind. JOHNSON. "In the first place, sir, we learn from Othello this very useful moral, not to make an unequal match; in the second place, we learn not to yield too readily to suspicion. The handkerchief is merely a trick, though a very pretty trick; but there are no other circumstances of reasonable suspicion, except what is related by Iago of Cassio's warm expressions concerning Desdemona in his sleep; and that depended entirely upon the assertion of one man. No, sir, I think Othello has more moral than almost any play."

Talking of a penurious gentleman of our acquaintance, Johnson said, "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he would not much care if it should sour."

He said, he wished to see "John Dennis's Critical Works" collected. Davies said they would not sell. Dr. Johnson seemed to think otherwise.

Davies said of a well known dramatick authour, that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar; having begun by attacking people, particularly the players."

He reminded Dr. Johnson of Mr. Murphy's having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story.

Johnson and I supped this evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Mr. Nairne, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dunsinan, and my very worthy friend, Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

We discussed the question whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did. JOHNSON. "No, sir: before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority, have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous: but he is not improved: he is only not sensible of his defects." Sir Joshua said the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine; but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. "I am (said he) in very good spirits, when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up; and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better." JOHNSON. "No, sir; wine gives not light, gay, ideal, hilarity; but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken,—nay, drunken is a coarse word,—none of those *vinous* flights." SIR JOSHUA. "Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of

those who were drinking." JOHNSON. "Perhaps, contempt.—And, sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced; and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure: cock-fighting, or bear-baiting, will raise the spirits of a company, as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking; as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are medlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general: and let it be considered, that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man." Sir William Forbes said, "Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer, which is made brisker by being set before the fire?"—"Nay (said Johnson, laughing), I cannot answer that: that is too much for me."

I observed, that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds; but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking. JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits; in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me."

He told us, "almost all his Ramblers were written just as they were wanted for the press; that he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and wrote the remainder, while the former part of it was printing. When it was wanted, and he had fairly sat down to it, he was sure it would be done."

He said, that for general improvement, a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to; though to be sure, if a man has a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "what we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read." He told us, he read Fielding's "Amelia" through without stopping.[1] He said, "if a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may perhaps not feel again the inclination."

Sir Joshua mentioned Mr. Cumberland's Odes, which were just published. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, they would have been thought as good as Odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them; but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down every thing before it. Nay, Cumberland has made his Odes subsidiary to the fame of another man.[2] They might have run well enough by themselves; but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double."

We talked of the Reviews, and Dr. Johnson spoke

1 We have here an involuntary testimony to the excellence of this admirable writer, to whom we have seen that Dr. Johnson *directly* allowed so little merit.

2 Mr. Romney, the painter, who has now deservedly established a high reputation.

of them as he did at Thrale's.[1] Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authours were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame. JOHNSON. "Nay, sir, those who write in them, write well in order to be paid well."

Soon after this day, he went to Bath with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I had never seen that beautiful city, and wished to take the opportunity of visiting it, while Johnson was there. Having written to him, I received the following answer.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"WHY do you talk of neglect? When did I neglect you? If you will come to Bath, we shall all be glad to see you. Come, therefore, as soon as you can.

"But I have a little business for you at London. Bid Francis look in the paper drawer of the chest of drawers in my bed-chamber, for two cases; one for the Attorney-General, and one for the Solicitor-General. They lie, I think, at the top of my papers; otherwise they are somewhere else, and will give me more trouble.

"Please to write to me immediately, if they can be found. Make my compliments to all our friends round the world, and to Mrs. Williams at home.

"I am, sir, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Search for the papers as soon as you can, that, if

1 Page 225 of this volume.

it is necessary, I may write to you again before you come down."

On the 26th of April, I went to Bath; and on my arrival at the Pelican inn, found lying for me an obliging invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by whom I was agreeably entertained almost constantly during my stay. They were gone to the rooms; but there was a kind note from Dr. Johnson, that he should sit at home all the evening. I went to him directly, and before Mr. and Mrs. Thrale returned, we had by ourselves some hours of tea-drinking and talk.

I shall group together such of his sayings as I preserved during the few days that I was at Bath.

Of a person who differed from him in politicks, he said, "In private life he is a very honest gentleman; but I will not allow him to be so in publick life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong: that is, between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that —— acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were. They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong are criminal. They may be convinced; but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

It having been mentioned, I know not with what truth, that a certain female political writer, whose doctrines he disliked, had of late become very fond of dress, sat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge:—Johnson. "She is better employed at her toilet, than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters."

He told us that "Addison wrote Budgell's papers in the Spectator, at least mended them so much, that

he made them almost his own; and that Draper, Tonson's partner, assured Mrs. Johnson, that the much admired Epilogue to 'The Distressed Mother,' which came out in Budgell's name, was in reality written by Addison."

"The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation. The characteristick of our own government at present is imbecility. The magistrates dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged. The guards will not come for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries."

Of the father of one of our friends, he observed, "He never clarified his notions, by filtrating them through other minds. He had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low.—I dug the canal deeper," said he.

He told me that "so long ago as 1748 he had read 'The Grave, a Poem,'[1] but did not like it much." I differed from him; for though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought, and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him; for the poem has passed through many editions, and is still much read by people of a serious cast of mind.

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as one who did good to many, but by no means "by

1 I am sorry that there are no memoirs of the Reverend Robert Blair, the authour of this poem. He was the representative of the ancient family of Blair, of Blair, in Ayrshire, but the estate had descended to a female, and afterwards passed to the son of her husband by another marriage. He was minister of the parish of Athelstaneford, where Mr. John Home was his successor; so that it may truly be called classick ground. His son, who is of the same name, and a man eminent for talents and learning, is now, with universal approbation, Solicitor-general of Scotland.

stealth," and instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON. "I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence, as she does from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jenyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive."

He would not allow me to praise a lady then at Bath; observing, "She does not gain upon me, sir; I think her empty-headed." He was, indeed, a stern critick upon characters and manners. Even Mrs. Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain article by article, how one of our friends could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us by a lively extravagant sally, on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said, "Nay, madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly." JOHNSON. "With *your* wings, madam, you *must* fly: but have a care, there are *clippers* abroad." How very well was this said, and how fully has experience proved the truth of it! But have they not *clipped* rather *rudely*, and gone a great deal *closer* than was necessary?

A gentleman expressed a wish to go and live three years at Otaheité, or New Zealand, in order to obtain a full acquaintance with people, so totally different from all that we have ever known, and be satisfied what pure nature can do for man. JOHN-

SON. "What could you learn, sir? What can savages tell, but what they themselves have seen? Of the past, or the invisible, they can tell nothing. The inhabitants of Otaheité and New Zealand are not in a state of pure nature; for it is plain they broke off from some other people. Had they grown out of the ground, you might have judged of a state of pure nature. Fanciful people may talk of a mythology being amongst them; but it must be invention. They have once had religion, which has been gradually debased. And what account of their religion can you suppose to be learnt from savages? Only consider, sir, our own state: our religion is in a book; we have an order of men whose duty it is to teach it, we have one day in the week set apart for it, and this is in general pretty well observed: yet ask the first ten gross men you meet, and hear what they can tell of their religion."

On Monday, April 29, he and I made an excursion to Bristol, where I was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot, into the authenticity of "*Rowley's* poetry," as I had seen him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "*Ossian's* poetry." George Catcot, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley, as Hugh Blair was for *Ossian*, (I trust my Reverend friend will excuse the comparison), attended us at our inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity called out, "I'll make Dr. Johnson a convert." Dr. Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses, while Catcot stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr. Johnson's face, wondering that he was not yet convinced. We called on Mr. Barret, the surgeon, and saw some of the *originals* as they were called, which were executed very artificially; but from a careful inspection of them, and a

consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, we were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated from internal evidence, by several able criticks.[1]

Honest Catcot seemed to pay no attention whatever to any objections, but insisted, as an end of all controversy, that we should go with him to the tower of the church of St. Mary, Redcliff, and *view with our own eyes* the ancient chest in which the manuscripts were found. To this, Dr. Johnson good-naturedly agreed; and though troubled with a shortness of breathing, laboured up a long flight of steps, till we came to the place where the wonderous chest stood. "*There* (said Catcot, with a bouncing confident credulity), *there* is the very chest itself." After this *ocular demonstration*, there was no more to be said. He brought to my recollection a Scotch Highlander, a man of learning too, and who had seen the world, attesting, and at the same time giving his reasons for the authenticity of Fingal:—"I have heard all that poem when I was young."—"Have you, sir? Pray what have you heard?"—"I have heard Ossian, Oscar, and *every one of them*."

Johnson said of Chatterton, "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things."

We were by no means pleased with our inn at Bristol. "Let us see now (said I), how we should describe it." Johnson was ready with his raillery. "Describe it, sir?—Why, it was so bad that Boswell wished to be in Scotland!"

After Dr. Johnson's return to London, I was several times with him at his house, where I occasionally slept, in the room that had been assigned for me.

1 Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Warton, Mr. Malone.

I dined with him at Dr. Taylor's, at General Oglethorpe's, and at General Paoli's. To avoid a tedious minuteness, I shall group together what I have preserved of his conversation during this period also, without specifying each scene where it passed, except one, which will be found so remarkable as certainly to deserve a very particular relation. Where the place or the persons do not contribute to the zest of the conversation, it is unnecessary to encumber my page with mentioning them. To know of what vintage our wine is, enables us to judge of its value, and to drink it with more relish: but to have the produce of each vine of one vineyard, in the same year, kept separate, would serve no purpose. To know that our wine (to use an advertising phrase), is "of the stock of an ambassadour lately deceased," heightens its flavour: but it signifies nothing to know the bin where each bottle was once deposited.

"Garrick (he observed) does not play the part of Archer in 'The Beaux Stratagem' well. The gentleman should break out through the footman, which is not the case as he does it."

"Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this; but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better."

"The little volumes entitled '*Respublicæ*,' which are very well done, were a bookseller's work."

"There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous." This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's "Moral Philosophy."

But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it. Madame Sevigne, who, though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

"That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."

"Though many men are nominally entrusted with the administration of hospitals and other publick institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on; owing to confidence in him, and indolence in them."

"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put in the hands of every young gentleman. An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say 'I'll be genteel.' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in." No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be, than Johnson; or however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements. Lord Eliot informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner in a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being

mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency in *the graces*." Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, madam (looking towards Johnson), that among *all* your acquaintance you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce.

"I read (said he) Sharpe's Letters on Italy over again, when I was at Bath. There is a great deal of matter in them."

"Mrs. Williams was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides. Little people are apt to be jealous: but they should not be jealous; for they ought to consider, that superiour attention will necessarily be paid to superiour fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that account may have an equal claim to attention; but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim."

Talking of his notes on Shakspeare, he said, "I despise those who do not see that I am right in the passage where *as* is repeated, and 'asses of great charge' introduced. That on 'To be, or not to be,' is disputable."[1]

A gentleman, whom I found sitting with him one morning, said, that in his opinion the character of an infidel was more detestable than that of a man noto-

1 It may be observed, that Mr. Malone, in his very valuable edition of Shakspeare, has fully vindicated Dr. Johnson from the idle censures which the first of these notes has given rise to. The interpretation of the other passage, which Dr. Johnson allows to be *disputable*, he has clearly shewn to be erroneous.

riously guilty of an atrocious crime. I differed from him, because we are surer of the odiousness of the one, than of the errour of the other. JOHNSON. "Sir, I agree with him; for the infidel would be guilty of any crime if he were inclined to it."

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world. One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury. Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of buildings in London. Does it not produce real advantage in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol. It is plain they are in gaol, not for building; for rents are not fallen.—A man gives half a guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, 'Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal.' Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor, whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor? You are much surer that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompense of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacock's brains were to be revived, how many carcasses would be left to the poor at a cheap rate: and as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol: nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too."

The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made his conversation seem too desultory, Johnson observed, "Oglethorpe, sir, never *completes* what he has to say."

He on the same account made a similar remark on Patrick Lord Elibank: "Sir, there is nothing *conclusive* in his talk."

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." BOSWELL. "Why then meet at table?" JOHNSON. "Why to eat and drink together, and to promote kindness; and, sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation; for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this reason, Sir Robert Walpole said, he always talked bawdy at his table, because in that all could join."

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman ask Mr. Levett a variety of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by, he broke out, "Sir, you have but two topicks, yourself and me. I am sick of both." "A man (said he) should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb; and, therefore, should avoid having any one topick of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr. Oldfield, who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough. He came into a coffee-house one day, and told that his Grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half an hour. 'Did he indeed speak for half an hour?' (said Belchier, the surgeon).—'Yes.' —'And what did he say of Dr. Oldfield?'—'Nothing.' —'Why then, sir, he was very ungrateful; for Dr.

Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an of an hour, without saying something of him."

"Every man is to take existence on the terms on which it is given to him. To some men it is given on condition of not taking liberties, which other men may take without much harm. One may drink wine, and be nothing the worse for it; on another, wine may have effects so inflammatory as to injure him both in body and mind, and perhaps make him commit something for which he may deserve to be hanged."

"Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' have not that painted form which is the taste of this age; but it is a book which will always sell, it has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation. I never before read Scotch history with certainty."

I asked him whether he would advise me to read the Bible with a commentary, and what commentaries he would recommend. Johnson. "To be sure, sir, I would have you read the Bible with a commentary; and I would recommend Lowth and Patrick on the Old Testament, and Hammond on the New."

During my stay in London this spring, I solicited his attention to another law case, in which I was engaged. In the course of a contested election for the Borough of Dumfermline, which I attended as one of my friend Colonel (afterwards Sir Archibald) Campbell's counsel; one of his political agents, who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward—attacked very rudely in a newspaper the Reverend Mr. James Thomson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons. Upon this the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by

name from the pulpit with some severity; and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud, "What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of verity." I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit, and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr. Thomson, in the Court of Session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. The *Liberty of the pulpit* was our great ground of defence; but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The Court of Session, however—the fifteen Judges, who are at the same time the Jury, decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion; and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. Johnson was satisfied that the judgement was wrong, and dictated to me the following argument in confutation of it:

"Of the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the act itself, and the particular circumstances with which it is invested.

"The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is entrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd tending not his own sheep, but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain.

"As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach, if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

"As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke, and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn.

"If we inquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the Church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of sinners was publick censure, and open penance; penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the church had yet no help from the civil power; while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of persecution; and when governours were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority.

"That the Church, therefore, had once a power of publick censure is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

"The hour came at length, when after three hundred years of struggle and distress, Truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrate from that time co-operated with the priest, and

clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the State, when it came to the assistance of the Church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures which were lawful before, were lawful still. But they had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow Christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

"It therefore appears from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by publick censure has been always considered as inherent in the Church; and that this right was not conferred by the civil power; for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the Christian magistrate interposed his office, not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was insufficient; and when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment, from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

"It is not improbable that from this acknowledged power of publick censure, grew in time the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of publick reprehension were willing to submit themselves to the priest, by a private accusation of themselves; and to obtain a reconciliation with the Church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would, in times of ignorance and corruption, easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding

the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconcilement.

"From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, to torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controlled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though he may not pry: he may yet hear, though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him it is still his duty to use, for the benefit of his flock. A father who lives near a wicked neighbour, may forbid a son to frequent his company. A minister who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness, may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them one by one in friendly converse, or by a parochial visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them all together? Of that which is to be made known to all, how is there any difference whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all, must necessarily be publick. Whether it shall be publick at once, or publick by degrees, is the only question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper, and the warning more effectual.

"It may easily be urged, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish at will the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent, and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence; he may be rash, and judge without examination; he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too much

harshness; he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment under the shelter of his pastoral character.

"Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted; yet courts of law must judge, though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgement, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

"If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust; we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable; so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publickly known throughout the parish; and on occasion of a publick election, warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which publick elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by one of his parishioners, as pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing, as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a publick paper, with scandal, defamation, and falsehood. The

minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood, was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and with all the fortitude of injured honesty, he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and from danger. The man whom he accuses pretends not to be innocent; or at least only pretends; for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to publick happiness. To warn the people, therefore, against it was not wanton and officious, but necessary and pastoral.

"What then is the fault with which this worthy minister is charged? He has usurped no dominion over conscience. He has exerted no authority in support of doubtful and controverted opinions. He has not dragged into light a bashful and corrigible sinner. His censure was directed against a breach of morality, against an act which no man justifies. The man who appropriated this censure to himself, is evidently and notoriously guilty. His consciousness of his own wickedness incited him to attack his faithful reprover with open insolence and printed accusations. Such an attack made defence necessary; and we hope it will be at last decided that the means of defence were just and lawful."

When I read this to Mr. Burke, he was highly

pleased, and exclaimed, "Well; he does his work in a workman-like manner."[1]

Mr. Thomson wished to bring the cause by appeal before the House of Lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person who lately presided so ably in that Most Honourable House, and who was then Attorney-General. As my readers will no doubt be glad also to read the opinion of this eminent man upon the same subject, I shall here insert it.

CASE.

"THERE is herewith laid before you,

"1. Petition for the Reverend Mr. James Thomson, minister of Dumfermline.

"2. Answers thereto.

"3. Copy of the judgement of the Court of Session upon both.

"4. Notes of the opinions of the Judges, being the reasons upon which their decree is grounded.

"These papers you will please to peruse, and give your opinion,

"Whether there is a probability of the above decree of the Court of Session's being reversed, if Mr. Thomson should appeal from the same?"

"I DON'T think the appeal advisable: not only because the value of the judgement is in no degree

1 As a proof of Dr. Johnson's extraordinary powers of composition, it appears from the original manuscript of this excellent dissertation, of which he dictated the first eight paragraphs on the 10th of May, and the remainder on the 13th, that there are in the whole only seven corrections, or rather variations, and those not considerable. Such were at once the vigorous and accurate emanations of his mind.

adequate to the expense; but because there are many chances, that upon the general complexion of the case, the impression will be taken to the disadvantage of the appellant.

"It is impossible to approve the style of that sermon. But the *complaint* was not less ungracious from that man, who had behaved so ill by his original libel, and, at the time, when he received the reproach he complains of. In the last article, all the plaintiffs are equally concerned. It struck me also with some wonder, that the Judges should think so much fervour apposite to the occasion of reproving the defendant for a little excess.

"Upon the matter, however, I agree with them in condemning the behaviour of the minister; and in thinking it a subject fit for ecclesiastical censure; and even for an action, if any individual could qualify[1] a wrong, and a damage arising from it. But this I doubt. The circumstance of publishing the reproach in a pulpit, though extremely indecent, and culpable in another view, does not constitute a different sort of wrong, or any other rule of law, than would have obtained, if the same words had been pronounced elsewhere. I don't know whether there be any difference in the law of Scotland, in the definition of slander, before the Commissaries, or the Court of Session. The common law of England does not give way to actions for every reproachful word. An action cannot be brought for general damages, upon any words which import less than an offence cognisable by law; consequently no action could have been brought here for the words in question. Both laws admit the truth to be a justification in action *for*

1 It is curious to observe that Lord Thurlow has here, perhaps in compliment to North Britain, made use of a term of the Scotch law, which to an English reader may require explanation. To *qualify* a wrong, is to point out and establish it.

words; and the law of England does the same in actions for libels. The judgement, therefore, seems to me to have been wrong, in that the Court repelled that defence.

"E. THURLOW."

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's Life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui,* and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description, had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chymistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematicks, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if pos-

sible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray, (said I), let us have Dr. Johnson."—"What with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world (said Mr. Edward Dilly): Dr. Johnson would never forgive me."—"Come (said I), if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."[1] I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:—"Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—" BOSWELL. "Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have, is agreeable to you." JOHNSON. "What

[1] This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson; when the truth is, it was only *supposed* by me.

do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotick friends with him." JOHNSON. "Well, sir, and what then? What care *I* for his *patriotick friends?* Poh!" BOSWELL. "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion,[1] covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, sir? (said I). Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams." BOSWELL. "But, my dear sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

1 See p. 203 of this volume.

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured, would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to shew Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, sir, (said she, pretty peevishly), Dr. Johnson is to dine at home."—"Madam (said I), his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day; as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a for-

tune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna-Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee."—JOHNSON. "Too, too, too," (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr. Wilkes, sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, besides Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physick at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than

Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange;—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"[1] but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimick." One of the company added, "A merry Andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he

1 Johnson's "London, a Poem," v. 145.

was irresistible.[1] He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.'"

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON. "Yes, sir, I know

1 Foote told me, that Johnson said of him "For loud obstreperous broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal."

that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise á man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player: if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentick information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the 'Life of Dryden,' and in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney, and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his 'Apology' to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be

sure, sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:

> 'Each might his several province well command,
> Would all but stoop to what they understand.'"

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps;* he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then shewed me an ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing.[1] I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries."—"When I was at Inverary, (said he), on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, 'It is then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me; for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

> 'Off with his head! So much for *Aylesbury*.'

I was then member for Aylesbury."

1 See Vol. II. page 12.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's Art of Poetry, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere.*" Mr. Wilkes, according to my note, gave the interpretation thus: "It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things; as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers." But upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say, that "the word *communia* being a Roman law-term, signifies here things *communis juris*, that is to say, what have never yet been treated by any body; and this appears clearly from what followed,

"———— *Tuque*
Rectiùs Iliacum carmen deducis in actus
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus."

You will easier make a tragedy out of the Iliad than on any subject not handled before.[1] JOHNSON. "He

1 My very pleasant friend himself, as well as others *who remember old stories*, will no doubt be surprised, when I observe that *John Wilkes* here shews himself to be of the WARBURTONIAN SCHOOL. It is nevertheless true, as appears from Dr. Hurd the Bishop of Worcester's very elegant commentary and notes on the "*Epistola ad Pisones.*"

It is necessary to a fair consideration of the question, that the whole passage in which the words occur should be kept in view:

"*Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes*
Personam formare novam, servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.
Difficile est propriè communia dicere: tuque
Rectiùs Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.
Publica materies privati juris erit, si
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec desilies imitator in arctum
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetat aut operis lex."

means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done."

The "Commentary" thus illustrates it: "But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after, but every one *judges* of common right, according to the extent and comprehension of his own idea; therefore he advises to labour and refit *old characters and subjects*, particularly those made known and authorised by the practice of Homer and the Epic writers."

The "Note" is

"*Difficile* EST PROPRIE COMMUNIA DICERE." Lambin's Comment is "*Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: et ita, quæ cuivis exposita sunt et in medio quodammodo posita, quasi vacua et à nemine occupata.*" And that this is the true meaning of *communia* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it; so that the sense given it in the commentary is unquestionably the right one. Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critick has this strange passage: "*Difficile quidem esse propriè communia dicere, hoc est, materiam vulgarem, notam et è medio petitam, ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et scriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi procul dubio ponderis ista est observatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habitâ, major videtur esse gloria fabulam formare penitùs novam, quam veterem, utcunque mutatam, de novo exhibere.*" (Poet. Præl. v. ii. p. 164). Where having first put a wrong construction on the word *communia*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticism. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* subjects to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superiour difficulty of the latter, from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers.

For my own part (with all deference for Dr. Hurd, who thinks the *case clear*), I consider the passage, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*," to be a *crux* for the criticks on Horace.

The explication which my Lord of Worcester treats with so much contempt, is nevertheless countenanced by authority which I find quoted by the learned Baxter in his edition of Horace,

WILKES. "We have no City-Poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was El-

"*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*, h. e. res vulgares disertis verbis enarrare, vel humile thema cum dignitate tractare. *Difficile est communes res propriis explicare verbis.* Vet. Schol." I was much disappointed to find that the great critick, Dr. Bentley, has no note upon this very difficult passage, as from his vigorous and illuminate mind I should have expected to receive more satisfaction than I have yet had.

Sanadon thus treats of it. "*Propriè communia dicere; c'est à dire, qu'il n'est pas aisé de former à ces personnages d'imagination, des caractères particuliers et cependant vraisemblables. Comme l'on a été le maître de les former tels qu'on a voulu, les fautes que l'on fait en cela sont moins pardonnables. C'est pourquoi Horace conseille de prendre toujours des sujets connus, tels que sont, par exemple, ceux que l'on peut tirer des poëmes d'Homere.*"

And *Dacier* observes upon it, "*Après avoir marqué les deux qualités qu'il faut donner aux personnages qu'on invente, il conseille aux Poëtes tragiques, de n'user pas trop facilement de cette liberté qu'ils ont d'en inventer, car il est très difficile de reussir dans ces nouveaux caractères. Il est mal aisé, dit Horace,* de traiter proprement, *c'est à dire* convenablement, *des* sujets communs; *c'est à dire, des sujets inventés, et qui n'ont aucun fondement ni dans l'Histoire ni dans la Fable; et il les appelle* communs, *parce qu'ils sont en disposition à tout le monde, et que tout le monde a le droit de les inventer, et qu'ils sont, comme on dit, au premier occupant.*" See his observations at large on this expression and the following.

After all, I cannot help entertaining some doubt whether the words, *Difficile est propriè communia dicere*, may not have been thrown in by Horace to form a *separate* article in a "choice of difficulties" which a poet has to encounter, who chooses a new subject; in which case it must be uncertain which of the various explanations is the true one, and every reader has a right to decide as it may strike his own fancy. And even should the words be understood as they generally are, to be connected both with what goes before and what comes after, the exact sense cannot be absolutely ascertained; for instance, whether *propriè* is meant to signify *in an appropriated manner*, as Dr. Johnson here understands it, or, as it is often used by Cicero, *with propriety*, or *elegantly*. In short, it is a rare instance of a defect in perspicuity in an admirable writer, who with almost every species of excellence, is peculiarly remarkable for that quality. The length of this note

kanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits." JOHNSON. "I suppose, sir, Settle did as well for Aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?"

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON. "Why yes, sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which shewed that he meant only wit. Upon this topick he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before

perhaps requires an apology. Many of my readers, I doubt not, will admit that a critical discussion of a passage in a favourite classick is very engaging.

judgement is obtained, can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ:* WILKES. "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON. (To Mr. Wilkes) "You must know, sir, I lately took my friend Boswell, and shewed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES. "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people, like you and me." JOHNSON, (smiling). "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis;* adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed,* "a good-humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotick groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it."[1] WILKES. "Had Lord

1 It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed.

Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate 'MORTIMER' to him."

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to shew a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards in a conversation with me waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, "that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

I talked a good deal to him of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination. To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her, he said on a former occasion, "Nay, madam, Boswell is in the right; I should have

visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting every thing into the newspapers." This evening he exclaimed, "I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs. Rudd."

I mentioned a scheme which I had of making a tour to the Isle of Man, and giving a full account of it; and that Mr. Burke had playfully suggested as a motto,

"The proper study of mankind is MAN."

JOHNSON. "Sir, you will get more by the book than the jaunt will cost you; so you will have your diversion for nothing, and add to your reputation."

On the evening of the next day I took leave of him, being to set out for Scotland. I thanked him with great warmth for all his kindness. "Sir (said he), you are very welcome. Nobody repays it with more."

How very false is the notion that has gone round the world of the rough, and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man. That he had occasional sallies of heat of temper, and that he was sometimes, perhaps, too "easily provoked" by absurdity and folly, and sometimes too desirous of triumph in colloquial contest, must be allowed. The quickness both of his perception and sensibility disposed him to sudden explosions of satire; to which his extraordinary readiness of wit was a strong and almost irresistible incitement. To adopt one of the finest images in Mr. Home's "Douglas,"

"———— On each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash!"————

I admit that the beadle within him was often so eager to apply the lash, that the judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation.

That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted; but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand to knock down every one who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word; so much so, that many gentlemen who were long acquainted with him never received, or even heard a strong expression from him.

The following letters concerning an Epitaph which he wrote for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, in Westminster-Abbey, afford at once a proof of his unaffected modesty, his carelessness as to his own writings, and of the great respect which he entertained for the taste and judgement of the excellent and eminent person to whom they are addressed:

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE been kept away from you, I know not well how, and of these vexatious hindrances I know not when there will be an end. I therefore send you the poor dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself; and if you then think it right, shew it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected. If you think any thing much amiss, keep it to yourself, till we come together. I have sent two copies, but prefer the card. The dates must be settled by Dr. Percy. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 16, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

"MISS REYNOLDS has a mind to send the Epitaph to Dr. Beattie; I am very willing, but having no copy, cannot immediately recollect it. She tells me you have lost it. Try to recollect, and put down as much as you retain; you perhaps may have kept what I have dropped. The lines for which I am at a loss are something of *rerum civilium sivè naturalium.*[1] It was a sorry trick to lose it; help me if you can. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 22, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"The gout grows better but slowly."

It was, I think, after I had left London in this year, that this Epitaph gave occasion to a *Remonstrance* to the MONARCH OF LITERATURE, for an account of which I am indebted to Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

That my readers may have the subject more fully and clearly before them, I shall first insert the Epitaph.

"OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,

---

1 These words must have been in the other copy. They are not in that which was preferred.

Affectuum potens at lenis dominator:
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI;
Eblanæ literis institutus:
Obiit Londini,
April. IV, MDCCLXXIV."

Sir William Forbes writes to me thus: "I enclose the *Round Robin*. This *jeu d'esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr. Goldsmith. The Epitaph, written for him by Dr. Johnson, became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's consideration.—But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe,[1] drew up an address to Dr. Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and

1 [This prelate, who was afterwards translated to the See of Limerick, died at Wimbledon in Surrey, June 7, 1806, in his eightieth year. The original *Round Robin* remained in his possession; the paper which Sir William Forbes transmitted to Mr. Boswell being only a copy. M.]

humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing, to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with much good humour,[1] and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen, that he would

1 He however, upon seeing Dr. Warton's name to the suggestion, that the Epitaph should be in English, observed to Sir Joshua, "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." He said too, "I should have thought Mund Burke would have had more sense." Mr. Langton, who was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin.* The Epitaph is engraved upon Dr. Goldsmith's monument without any alteration. At another time, when somebody endeavoured to argue in favour of its being in English, Johnson said, "The language of the country of which a learned man was a native, is not the language fit for his epitaph, which should be in ancient and permanent language. Consider, sir; how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph upon Erasmus *in Dutch!*"—For my own part, I think it would be best to have Epitaphs written both in a learned language, and in the language of the country; so that they might have the advantage of being more universally understood, and at the same time be secured of classical stability. I cannot, however, but be of opinion, that it is not sufficiently discriminative. Applying to Goldsmith equally the epithets of "*Poetæ, Historici, Physici,*" is surely not right; for as to his claim to the last of those epithets, I have heard Johnson himself say, "Goldsmith, sir, will give us a very fine book upon the subject; but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history." His book is indeed an excellent performance, though in some instances he appears to have trusted too much to Buffon, who, with all his theoretical ingenuity and extraordinary eloquence, I suspect had little actual information in the science on which he wrote so admirably. For instance, he tells us that the *cow* sheds her horns every two years; a most palpable errour, which Goldsmith has faithfully transferred into his book. It is wonderful that Buffon, who lived so much in the country, at his noble seat, should have fallen into such a blunder. I suppose he has confounded the *cow* with the *deer.*

alter the Epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it; but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey, with an English inscription.*

"I consider this *Round Robin* as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr. Johnson's character."

My readers are presented with a faithful transcript of a paper, which I doubt not of their being desirous to see.

Sir William Forbes's observation is very just. The anecdote now related proves, in the strongest manner, the reverence and awe with which Johnson was regarded, by some of the most eminent men of his time, in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him; while it also confirms what I have again and again inculcated, that he was by no means of that ferocious and irascible character which has been ignorantly imagined.

This hasty composition is also to be remarked as one of the thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr. Burke; who while he is equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least; can, with equal facility, embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politicks, or the ingenious topicks of literary investigation.[1]

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"MADAM,

"You must not think me uncivil in omitting to answer the letter with which you favoured me some time ago. I imagined it to have been written with-

1 Beside this Latin Epitaph, Johnson honoured the memory of his friend Goldsmith with a short one in Greek. See page 8 of this volume.

out Mr. Boswell's knowledge, and therefore supposed the answer to require, what I could not find, a private conveyance.

"The difference with Lord Auchinleck is now over; and since young Alexander has appeared, I hope no more difficulties will arise among you; for I sincerely wish you all happy. Do not teach the young ones to dislike me, as you dislike me yourself; but let me at least have Veronica's kindness, because she is my acquaintance.

"You will now have Mr. Boswell home; it is well that you have him; he has led a wild life. I have taken him to Lichfield, and he has followed Mr. Thrale to Bath. Pray take care of him, and tame him. The only thing in which I have the honour to agree with you is, in loving him; and while we are so much of a mind in a matter of so much importance, our other quarrels will, I hope, produce no great bitterness. I am, madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 16, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, June 25, 1776.

"You have formerly complained that my letters were too long. There is no danger of that complaint being made at present; for I find it difficult for me to write to you at all. [Here an account of having been afflicted with a return of melancholy or bad spirits.]

"The boxes of books[1] which you sent to me are arrived; but I have not yet examined the contents.

* * * * * *

1 Upon a settlement of our account of expenses on a Tour to the Hebrides, there was a balance due to me, which Dr. Johnson chose to discharge by sending books.

"I send you Mr. Maclaurin's paper for the negro, who claims his freedom in the Court of Session."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL.

"DEAR SIR,

"THESE black fits, of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. When did I complain that your letters were too long?[1] Your last letter, after a very long delay, brought very bad news. [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and—what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself,—a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction.]

"Read Cheyne's 'English Malady;' but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness. * * * * *

"To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill. * * * * *

"I do not now say any more, than that I am, with great kindness and sincerity, dear sir,

"Your humble servant,

"July 2, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"It was last year determined by Lord Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench, that a negro cannot be taken out of the kingdom without his own consent."

1 Baretti told me that Johnson complained of my writing very long letters to him when I was upon the continent: which was most certainly true; but it seems my friend did not remember it.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL.

"DEAR SIR,

"I MAKE haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached.
* * * *

"Now, my dear Bozzy, let us have done with quarrels and with censure. Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you never need read through; but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult. Of these books, of which the use is only occasional, it is often sufficient to know the contents, that, when any question arises, you may know where to look for information.

"Since I wrote, I have looked over Mr. Maclaurin's plea, and think it excellent. How is the suit carried on? If by subscription, I commission you to contribute, in my name, what is proper. Let nothing be wanting in such a case. Dr. Drummond,[1] I see, is superseded. His father would have grieved; but he lived to obtain the pleasure of his son's election, and died before that pleasure was abated.

"Langton's lady has brought him a girl, and both are well; I dined with him the other day.
* * * * *

"It vexes me to tell you, that on the evening of

1 The son of Johnson's old friend, Mr. William Drummond. (See Vol. II. p. 125). He was a young man of such distinguished merit, that he was nominated to one of the medical professorships in the College of Edinburgh, without solicitation, while he was at Naples. Having other views, he did not accept of the honour, and soon afterwards died.

the 29th of May I was seized by the gout, and am not quite well. The pain has not been violent, but the weakness and tenderness were very troublesome, and what is said to be very uncommon, it has not alleviated my other disorders. Make use of youth and health while you have them; make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am, my dear sir,

"Your most affectionate

"July 16, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, Edinburgh, July 18, 1776.

"YOUR letter of the second of this month was rather a harsh medicine; but I was delighted with that spontaneous tenderness, which, a few days afterwards, sent forth such balsam as your next brought me. I found myself for some time so ill that all I could do was to preserve a decent appearance, while all within was weakness and distress. Like a reduced garrison that has some spirit left, I hung out flags, and planted all the force I could muster, upon the walls. I am now much better, and I sincerely thank you for your kind attention and friendly counsel.

* * * * * *

"Count Manucci[1] came here last week from travelling in Ireland. I have shewn him what civilities I could on his own account, on yours, and on that of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. He has had a fall from his horse, and been much hurt. I regret this unlucky accident, for he seems to be a very amiable man."

As the evidence of what I have mentioned at the

1 A Florentine nobleman, mentioned by Johnson, in his "Notes of his Tour in France." I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him in London, in the spring of this year.

beginning of this year, I select from his private register the following passage:

"July 25, 1776. O GOD, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired should be sought by labour, and who, by thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect, look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O LORD, to design only what is lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen."[1]

It appears from a note subjoined, that this was composed when he "purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues."

Such a purpose, so expressed, at the age of sixty-seven, is admirable and encouraging; and it must impress all the thinking part of my readers with a consolatory confidence in habitual devotion, when they see a man of such enlarged intellectual powers as Johnson, thus in the genuine earnestness of secrecy, imploring the aid of that Supreme Being, "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"SIR,

"A YOUNG man, whose name is Paterson, offers himself this evening to the Academy. He is the son of a man[2] for whom I have long had a kindness, and who is now abroad in distress. I shall be glad that you will be pleased to shew him any little counte-

1 Prayers and Meditations, p. 151.

2 [Samuel Paterson, formerly a bookseller, latterly an auctioneer, and well known for his skill in forming catalogues of books. He died in London, October 29, 1802. M.]

nance, or pay him any small distinction. How much it is in your power to favour or to forward a young man I do not know; nor do I know how much this candidate deserves favour by his personal merit, or what hopes his proficiency may now give of future eminence. I recommend him as the son of my friend. Your character and station enable you to give a young man great encouragement by very easy means. You have heard of a man who asked no other favour of Sir Robert Walpole, than that he would bow to him at his levee. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"August 3, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Aug. 30, 1776.

[After giving him an account of my having examined the chests of books which he had sent to me, and which contained what may be truly called a numerous and miscellaneous *Stall Library*, thrown together at random:—]

"Lord Hailes was against the decree in the case of my client, the minister; not that he justified the minister, but because the parishioner both provoked and retorted. I sent his Lordship your able argument upon the case for his perusal. His observation upon it in a letter to me was, 'Dr. Johnson's *Suasorium* is pleasantly[1] and artfully composed. I suspect, however, that he has not convinced himself; for I

1 Why his Lordship uses the epithet *pleasantly*, when speaking of a grave piece of reasoning, I cannot conceive. But different men have different notions of pleasantry. I happened to sit by a gentleman one evening at the Opera-house in London, who at the moment when *Medea* appeared to be in great agony at the thought of killing her children, turned to me with a smile, and said, "*funny* enough."

believe that he is better read in ecclesiastical history, than to imagine that a Bishop or a Presbyter has a right to begin censure or discipline *è cathedrâ*.'[1]

* * * * * *

"For the honour of Count Manucci, as well as to observe that exactness of truth which you have taught me, I must correct what I said in a former letter. He did not fall from his horse, which might have been an imputation on his skill as an officer of cavalry; his horse fell with him.

"I have, since I saw you, read every word of 'Granger's Biographical History.' It has entertained me exceedingly, and I do not think him the *Whig* that you supposed. Horace Walpole's being his patron is, indeed, no good sign of his political principles. But he denied to Lord Mountstuart that he was a Whig, and said he had been accused by both parties of partiality. It seems he was like Pope,

'While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.'

I wish you would look more into his book; and as Lord Mountstuart wishes much to find a proper person to continue the work upon Granger's plan, and has desired I would mention it to you; if such a man occurs, please to let me know. His Lordship will give him generous encouragement."

"TO MR. ROBERT LEVETT.

"DEAR SIR,

"HAVING spent about six weeks at this place, we have at length resolved upon returning. I ex-

1 Dr. Johnson afterwards told me, that he was of opinion that a clergyman had this right.

pect to see you all in Fleet-street on the 30th of this month.

"I did not go into the sea till last Friday, but think to go most of this week, though I know not that it does me any good. My nights are very restless and tiresome, but I am otherwise well.

"I have written word of my coming to Mrs. Williams. Remember me kindly to Francis and Betsy.[1] I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Brighthelmstone, Oct. 21, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."[2]

I again wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 21st of October, informing him, that my father had, in the most liberal manner, paid a large debt for me, and that I had now the happiness of being upon very good terms with him; to which he returned the following answer.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAD great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is but short; no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously momentous. Let us not throw away any of our days

1 [His female servant. M.]

2 For this and Dr. Johnson's other letters to Mr. Levett, I am indebted to my old acquaintance, Mr. Nathaniel Thomas, whose worth and ingenuity have been long known to a respectable though not a wide circle; and whose collection of medals would do credit to persons of greater opulence.

[Mr. Nathaniel Thomas, who was many years Editor of the St. James's Chronicle, died March 1, 1795. M.]

upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry; and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence!

* * * * * *

"Do you ever hear from Mr. Langton? I visit him sometimes, but he does not talk. I do not like his scheme of life; but as I am not permitted to understand it, I cannot set any thing right that is wrong. His children are sweet babies.

"I hope my irreconcileable enemy, Mrs. Boswell, is well. Desire her not to transmit her malevolence to the young people. Let me have Alexander, and Veronica, and Euphemia, for my friends.

"Mrs. Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your well-wishers, is in a feeble and languishing state, with little hopes of growing better. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but is little benefited; and Dr. Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. Death is, however, at a distance: and what more than that can we say of ourselves? I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay. Mr. Levett is sound, wind and limb.

"I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmstone. The place was very dull, and I was not well; the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversification.

"Every year, however, we cannot wander, and must therefore endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his 'Treatise of Œconomy,' that if every thing be kept in a certain place, when any thing is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it

leaves will shew what is wanting; so if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

"I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suffered much for want of it; and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me. I am, my dearest Boswell,

"Your most humble servant,

"Bolt-court, Nov. 16, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 16th of November I informed him that Mr. Strahan had sent me *twelve* copies of the "Journey to the Western Islands," handsomely bound, instead of the *twenty* copies which were stipulated; but which, I supposed, were to be only in sheets; requested to know how they should be distributed: and mentioned that I had another son born to me, who was named David, and was a sickly infant.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE been for some time ill of a cold, which, perhaps, I made an excuse to myself for not writing, when in reality I knew not what to say.

"The books you must at last distribute as you think best, in my name, or your own, as you are inclined, or as you judge most proper. Every body cannot be obliged; but I wish that nobody may be offended. Do the best you can.

"I congratulate you on the increase of your family, and hope that little David is by this time well, and his mamma perfectly recovered. I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father. Cultivate his paternal tender-

ness as much as you can. To live at variance at all is uncomfortable; and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable. Besides that, in the whole dispute you have the wrong side; at least you gave the first provocations, and some of them very offensive. Let it now be all over. As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shewn you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence; this will secure your father. When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace they will not willingly lose it. If Mrs. Boswell would but be friends with me, we might now shut the temple of Janus.

"What came of Dr. Memis's cause? Is the question about the negro determined? Has Sir Allan any reasonable hopes? What is become of poor Macquarry? Let me know the event of all these litigations. I wish particularly well to the negro and Sir Allan.

"Mrs. Williams has been much out of order; and though she is something better, is likely, in her physician's opinion, to endure her malady for life, though she may, perhaps, die of some other. Mrs. Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy; if it were very reasonable to wish much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

"Baretti went away from Thrale's in some whimsical fit of disgust, or ill-nature, without taking any leave. It is well if he finds in any other place as good an habitation, and as many conveniencies. He has got five-and-twenty guineas by translating Sir Joshua's Discourses into Italian, and Mr. Thrale gave him an

hundred in the spring; so that he is yet in no difficulties.

"Colman has bought Foote's patent, and is to allow Foote for life sixteen hundred pounds a year, as Reynolds told me, and to allow him to play so often on such terms that he may gain four hundred pounds more. What Colman can get by this bargain,[1] but trouble and hazard, I do not see. I am, dear sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Dec. 21, 1776." "SAM. JOHNSON."

The Reverend Dr. Hugh Blair, who had long been admired as a preacher at Edinburgh, thought now of diffusing his excellent sermons more extensively, and increasing his reputation, by publishing a collection of them. He transmitted the manuscript to Mr. Strahan, the printer, who after keeping it for some time, wrote a letter to him, discouraging the publication. Such at first was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr. Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr. Johnson for his opinion; and after his unfavourable letter to Dr. Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson, on Christmas-eve, a note in which was the following paragraph:

"I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good, is to say too little."

I believe Mr. Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr. Johnson concerning them; and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr. Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase

1 [It turned out, however, a very fortunate bargain; for Foote, though not then fifty-six, died at an inn in Dover, in less than a year, Oct. 21, 1777. M.]

the volume, for which he and Mr. Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the publick so high, that to their honour be it recorded, the proprietors made Dr. Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards of another, of fifty pounds, thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price; and when he prepared another volume, they gave him at once three hundred pounds, being in all five hundred pounds, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness; and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than six hundred pounds.

In 1777, it appears from his "Prayers and Meditations," that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom, which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph, which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted: "When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind, very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies."[1] But we find his devotions in this year eminently fervent; and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure, and gladness.

On Easter day we find the following emphatick prayer: "Almighty and most merciful Father, who

1 Prayers and Meditations, p. 155.

seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me, and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; years and infirmities oppress me, terrour and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge. In all perplexities relieve and free me; and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, as that when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen."[1]

While he was at church, the agreeable impressions upon his mind are thus commemorated: "I was for some time distressed, but at last obtained, I hope from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased; and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer Book,

'*Vita ordinanda.*
Biblia legenda.
Theologiæ opera danda.
Serviendum et lætandum.'"

Mr. Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr. Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr. Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentick par-

1 Prayers and Meditations, p. 158.

ticulars of the life of her celebrated relation. Concerning her is the following letter:

"TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"You will be glad to hear that from Mrs. Goldsmith, whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of gratitude to us all, with promise to make the inquiries which we recommended to her.

"I would have had the honour of conveying this intelligence to Miss Caulfield, but that her letter is not at hand, and I know not the direction. You will tell the good news. I am, sir,

"Your most, &c.

"February 25, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 14, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"MY state of epistolary accounts with you at present is extraordinary. The balance, as to number, is on your side. I am indebted to you for two letters; one dated the 16th of November, upon which very day I wrote to you, so that our letters were exactly exchanged, and one dated the 21st of December last.

"My heart was warmed with gratitude by the truly kind contents of both of them; and it is amazing and vexing that I have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to you. But delay is inherent in me, by nature or by bad habit. I waited till I should have an opportunity of paying my compliments on a new year. I have procrastinated till the year is no longer new.

* * * * * *

"Dr. Memis's cause was determined against him, with 40l. costs. The Lord President, and two other of the Judges, dissented from the majority, upon this ground; that although there may have been no intention to injure him by calling him *Doctor of Medicine*, instead of *Physician*, yet, as he remonstrated against the designation before the charter was printed off, and represented that it was disagreeable, and even hurtful to him, it was ill-natured to refuse to alter it, and let him have the designation to which he was certainly entitled. My own opinion is, that our court has judged wrong. The defendants were *in malâ fide*, to persist in naming him in a way that he disliked. You remember poor Goldsmith, when he grew important, and wished to appear *Doctor Major*, could not bear your calling him *Goldy*. Would it not have been wrong to have named him so in your 'Preface to Shakspeare,' or in any serious permanent writing of any sort? The difficulty is, whether an action should be allowed on such petty wrongs. *De minimis non curat lex.*

"The negro cause is not yet decided. A memorial is preparing on the side of slavery. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed. Maclaurin is made happy by your approbation of his memorial for the black.

"Macquarry was here in the winter, and we passed an evening together. The sale of his estate cannot be prevented.

"Sir Allan Maclean's suit against the Duke of Argyle, for recovering the ancient inheritance of his family, is now fairly before all our judges. I spoke for him yesterday, and Maclaurin to-day; Crosbie spoke to-day against him. Three more counsel are to be heard, and next week the cause will be determined. I send you the *Informations*, or *Cases*, on

each side, which I hope you will read. You said to me when we were under Sir Allan's hospitable roof, 'I will help him with my pen.' You said it with a generous glow; and though his Grace of Argyle did afterwards mount you upon an excellent horse, upon which 'you looked like a Bishop,' you must not swerve from your purpose at Inchkenneth. I wish you may understand the points at issue, amidst our Scotch law principles and phrases.

[Here followed a full state of the case, in which I endeavoured to make it as clear as I could to an Englishman who had no knowledge of the formularies and technical language of the law of Scotland.]

"I shall inform you how the cause is decided here. But as it may be brought under the review of our Judges, and is certainly to be carried by appeal to the House of Lords, the assistance of such a mind as yours will be of consequence. Your paper on *Vicious Intromission* is a noble proof of what you can do even in Scotch law.

* * * * * *

"I have not yet distributed all your books. Lord Hailes and Lord Monboddo have each received one, and return you thanks. Monboddo dined with me lately, and having drank tea, we were a good while by ourselves, and as I knew that he had read the 'Journey' superficially, as he did not talk of it as I wished, I brought it to him, and read aloud several passages; and then he talked so, that I told him he was to have a copy *from the authour.* He begged *that* might be marked on it.

* * * * * *

"I ever am, my dear sir,
"Your most faithful
"And affectionate humble servant,
"James Boswell.

"SIR ALEXANDER DICK TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Prestonfield, Feb. 17, 1777.

"SIR,

"I HAD yesterday the honour of receiving your book of your '*Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*,' which you was so good as to send me, by the hands of our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell, of Auchinleck; for which I return you my most hearty thanks; and after carefully reading it over again, shall deposit it in my little collection of choice books, next our worthy friend's 'Journey to Corsica.' As there are many things to admire in both performances, I have often wished that no Travels or Journey should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity and capacity, to judge well, and describe faithfully, and in good language, the situation, condition, and manners of the countries past through. Indeed our country of Scotland, in spite of the union of the crowns, is still in most places so devoid of clothing, or cover from hedges and plantations, that it was well you gave your readers a sound *Monitoire* with respect to that circumstance. The truths you have told, and the purity of the language in which they are expressed, as your 'Journey' is universally read, may, and already appear to have a very good effect. For a man of my acquaintance, who has the largest nursery for trees and hedges in this country, tells me, that of late the demand upon him for these articles is doubled, and sometimes tripled. I have, therefore, listed Dr. Samuel Johnson in some of my memorandums of the principal planters and favourers of the enclosures, under a name which I took the liberty to invent from the Greek, *Papadendrion*. Lord Auchinleck and some few more are of the list.

I am told that one gentleman in the shire of Aberdeen, *viz.* Sir Archibald Grant, has planted above fifty millions of trees on a piece of very wild ground at Monimusk: I must inquire if he has fenced them well, before he enters my list; for that is the soul of enclosing. I began myself to plant a little, our ground being too valuable for much, and that is now fifty years ago; and the trees, now in my seventy-fourth year, I look up to with reverence, and shew them to my eldest son now in his fifteenth year, and they are full the height of my country-house here, where I had the pleasure of receiving you, and hope again to have that satisfaction with our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell. I shall always continue, with the truest esteem, dear Doctor,

"Your much obliged,

"And obedient humble servant,

"ALEXANDER DICK."[1]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT is so long since I heard any thing from you,[2] that I am not easy about it; write something to me next post. When you sent your last letter, every thing seemed to be mending; I hope nothing has lately grown worse. I suppose young Alexander continues to thrive, and Veronica is now very pretty company. I do not suppose the lady is yet reconciled to me, yet let her know that I love her very well, and value her very much.

"Dr. Blair is printing some sermons. If they are all like the first, which I have read, they are *sermones*

1 For a character of this very amiable man, see "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3d edit. p. 36.

2 By the then course of the post, my long letter of the 14th had not yet reached him.

aurei, ac auro magis aurei. It is excellently written both as to doctrine and language. Mr. Watson's book[1] seems to be much esteemed.

* * * * * *

"Poor Beauclerk still continues very ill. Langton lives on as he used to do. His children are very pretty, and, I think, his lady loses her Scotch. Paoli I never see.

"I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing, that I lost, as was computed, six-and-thirty ounces of blood in a few days. I am better, but not well.

"I wish you would be vigilant and get me Graham's 'Telemachus' that was printed at Glasgow, a very little book; and '*Johnstoni Poemata,*' another little book, printed at Middleburgh.

"Mrs. Williams sends her compliments, and promises that when you come hither, she will accommodate you as well as ever she can in the old room. She wishes to know whether you sent her book to Sir Alexander Gordon.

"My dear Boswell, do not neglect to write to me; for your kindness is one of the pleasures of my life, which I should be sorry to lose.

"I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"February 18, 1777."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 24, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOUR letter dated the 18th instant, I had the pleasure to receive last post. Although my late long neglect, or rather delay, was truly culpable, I am

1 History of Philip the Second.

tempted not to regret it, since it has produced me so valuable a proof of your regard. I did, indeed, during that inexcusable silence, sometimes divert the reproaches of my own mind, by fancying that I should hear again from you, inquiring with some anxiety about me, because, for aught you knew, I might have been ill.

"You are pleased to shew me, that my kindness is of some consequence to you. My heart is elated at the thought. Be assured, my dear sir, that my affection and reverence for you are exalted and steady. I do not believe that a more perfect attachment ever existed in the history of mankind. And it is a noble attachment; for the attractions are Genius, Learning, and Piety.

"Your difficulty of breathing alarms me, and brings into my imagination an event, which although in the natural course of things, I must expect at some period, I cannot view with composure.

* * * * * *

"My wife is much honoured by what you say of her. She begs you may accept of her best compliments. She is to send you some marmalade of oranges of her own making.

* * * * * *

"I ever am, my dear sir,
"Your most obliged
"And faithful humble servant,
"James Boswell."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE been much pleased with your late letter, and am glad that my old enemy, Mrs. Boswell, begins to feel some remorse. As to Miss Veronica's Scotch, I think it cannot be helped. An English

maid you might easily have; but she would still imitate the greater number, as they would be likewise those whom she must most respect. Her dialect will not be gross. Her mamma has not much Scotch, and you have yourself very little. I hope she knows my name, and does not call me *Johnston*.[1]

"The immediate cause of my writing is this:—One Shaw, who seems a modest and a decent man, has written an Erse Grammar, which a very learned Highlander, Macbean, has, at my request, examined and approved.

"The book is very little, but Mr. Shaw has been persuaded by his friends to set it at half a guinea, though I advised only a crown, and thought myself liberal. You, whom the authour considers as a great encourager of ingenious men, will receive a parcel of his proposals and receipts. I have undertaken to give you notice of them, and to solicit your countenance. You must ask no poor man, because the price is really too high. Yet such a work deserves patronage.

"It is proposed to augment our club from twenty to thirty, of which I am glad; for as we have several in it whom I do not much like to consort with,[2] I am for reducing it to a mere miscellaneous collection of conspicuous men, without any determinate character. * * * *

"I am, dear sir,
"Most affectionately yours,
"March 14, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

1 John*son* is the most common English formation of the sirname from *John*; John*ston* the Scotch. My illustrious friend observed, that many North Britons pronounced his name in their own way.

2 On account of their differing from him as to religion and politicks.

"My respects to Madam, to Veronica, to Alexander, to Euphemia, to David."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, April 4, 1777.

[After informing him of the death of my little son David, and that I could not come to London this spring:—]

"I think it hard that I should be a whole year without seeing you. May I presume to petition for a meeting with you in the autumn? You have, I believe, seen all the cathedrals in England, except that of Carlisle. If you are to be with Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourne, it would not be a great journey to come thither. We may pass a few most agreeable days there by ourselves, and I will accompany you a good part of the way to the southward again. Pray think of this.

"You forget that Mr. Shaw's Erse Grammar was put into your hands by myself last year. Lord Eglintoune put it into mine. I am glad that Mr. Macbean approves of it. I have received Mr. Shaw's proposals for its publication, which I can perceive are written *by the hand of a* MASTER.

* * * * * *

"Pray get for me all the editions of 'Walton's Lives.' I have a notion that the republication of them with Notes will fall upon me, between Dr. Horne and Lord Hailes."[1]

1 [None of the persons here mentioned executed the work which they had in contemplation. Walton's valuable book, however, has been correctly republished in quarto, with notes and illustrations, by the Rev. Mr. Zouch. M.]

Mr. Shaw's proposals † for "An Analysis of the Scotch Celtic Language," were thus illuminated by the pen of Johnson:

"THOUGH the Erse Dialect of the Celtic language has, from the earliest times, been spoken in Britain, and still subsists in the northern parts and adjacent islands, yet, by the negligence of a people rather warlike than lettered, it has hitherto been left to the caprice and judgement of every speaker, and has floated in the living voice, without the steadiness of analogy, or direction of rules. An Erse Grammar is an addition to the stores of literature; and its authour hopes for the indulgence always shewn to those that attempt to do what was never done before. If his work shall be found defective, it is at least all his own: he is not like other grammarians, a compiler or transcriber; what he delivers, he has learned by attentive observation among his countrymen, who perhaps will be themselves surprised to see that speech reduced to principles, which they have used only by imitation.

"The use of this book will, however, not be confined to the mountains and islands; it will afford a pleasing and important subject of speculation, to those whose studies lead them to trace the affinity of languages, and the migrations of the ancient races of mankind."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Glasgow, April 24, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"OUR worthy friend Thrale's death having appeared in the news-papers, and been afterwards contradicted, I have been placed in a state of very uneasy

uncertainty, from which I hoped to be relieved by you: but my hopes have as yet been vain. How could you omit to write to me on such an occasion? I shall wait with anxiety.

"I am going to Auchinleck to stay a fortnight with my father. It is better not to be there very long at one time. But frequent renewals of attention are agreeable to him.

"Pray tell me about this edition of 'The English Poets, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Authour, by Samuel Johnson, LL. D.' which I see advertised. I am delighted with the prospect of it. Indeed I am happy to feel that I am capable of being so much delighted with literature. But is not the charm of this publication chiefly owing to the *magnum nomen* in the front of it?

"What do you say of Lord Chesterfield's Memoirs and last Letters?

"My wife has made marmalade of oranges for you. I left her and my daughters and Alexander all well yesterday. I have taught Veronica to speak of you thus;—Dr. John*son*, not John*ston*. I remain, my dear sir,

"Your most affectionate,
"And obliged humble servant,
"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"THE story of Mr. Thrale's death, as he had neither been sick nor in any other danger, made so little impression upon me, that I never thought about obviating its effects on any body else. It is supposed to have been produced by the English custom of making April fools, that is, of sending one another on some foolish errand on the first of April.

"Tell Mrs. Boswell that I shall taste her marmalade cautiously at first. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.* Beware, says the Italian proverb, of a reconciled enemy. But when I find it does me no harm, I shall then receive it and be thankful for it, as a pledge of firm, and, I hope, of unalterable kindness. She is, after all, a dear, dear lady.

"Please to return Dr. Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well.

* * * * * *

"Your frequent visits to Auchinleck, and your short stay there, are very laudable and very judicious. Your present concord with your father gives me great pleasure; it was all that you seemed to want.

"My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.

"Make my compliments to Miss Veronica; I must leave it to *her* philosophy to comfort you for the loss of little David. You must remember, that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs. Thrale has but four out of eleven.

"I am engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of the English Poets. I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson; and if you could give me some information about him, for the life which we have is very scanty, I should be glad. I am, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"May 3, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

To those who delight in tracing the progress of works of literature, it will be an entertainment to compare the limited design with the ample execution of that admirable performance, "The Lives of the

English Poets," which is the richest, most beautiful, and indeed most perfect, production of Johnson's pen. His notion of it at this time appears in the preceding letter. He has a memorandum in this year, "29 May, Easter-Eve, I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long."[1] The bargain was concerning that undertaking; but his tender conscience seems alarmed, lest it should have intruded too much on his devout preparation for the solemnity of the ensuing day. But, indeed, very little time was necessary for Johnson's concluding a treaty with the booksellers; as he had, I believe, less attention to profit from his labours, than any man to whom literature has been a profession. I shall here insert from a letter to me from my late worthy friend Mr. Edward Dilly, though of a later date, an account of this plan so happily conceived; since it was the occasion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the best biography and criticism of which our language can boast.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR, "Southhill, Sept. 26, 1777.

"You will find by this letter, that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London, as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr. Johnson; I have no doubt your stock is much increased by the interview; few men, nay I may say, scarcely any man, has got that fund of knowledge and entertainment as Dr. Johnson in conversation. When he opens freely, every one is atten-

1 Prayers and Meditations, p. 155.

tive to what he says, and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure.

"The edition of the Poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press; and a concise account of the life of each authour, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superiour to any thing that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets, printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell, in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them; not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London Booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

"Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion; and, on consulting together, agreed, that all the proprietors of copy-right in the various Poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'The English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each authour, by Dr. Samuel Johnson; and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the Lives, *viz.* T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As

to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own: he mentioned two hundred guineas;[1] it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, *viz.* Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c. so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authourship, editorship, engravings, &c. &c. My brother will give you a list of the Poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them; the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London, of consequence. I am, dear sir,

"Ever yours,

"EDWARD DILLY."

I shall afterwards have occasion to consider the extensive and varied range which Johnson took, when he was once led upon ground which he trod with a peculiar delight, having long been intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of it that could interest and please.

"DR. JOHNSON TO CHARLES O'CONNOR, ESQ.[2]

"SIR,

"HAVING had the pleasure of conversing with Dr. Campbell about your character and your literary

1 [Johnson's moderation in demanding so small a sum is extraordinary. Had he asked one thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it. They have probably got five thousand guineas by this work in the course of twenty-five years. M.]

2 Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker, of the Treasury, Dublin, who

undertaking, I am resolved to gratify myself by renewing a correspondence which began and ended a great while ago, and ended, I am afraid, by my fault; a fault which, if you have not forgotten it, you must now forgive.

"If I have ever disappointed you, give me leave to tell you, that you have likewise disappointed me. I expected great discoveries in Irish antiquity, and large publications in the Irish language; but the world still remains as it was, doubtful and ignorant. What the Irish language is in itself, and to what languages it has affinity, are very interesting questions, which every man wishes to see resolved that has any philological or historical curiosity. Dr. Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact inquiry are those times (for such there were) when Ireland was the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it therefore, if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity. I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"May 19, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

obligingly communicated to me this and a former letter from Dr. Johnson to the same gentleman (for which see vol. i. page 259), writes to me as follows:—"Perhaps it would gratify you to have some account of Mr. O'Connor. He is an amiable, learned, venerable old gentleman, of an independent fortune, who lives at Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon; he is an admired writer, and Member of the Irish Academy.—The above Letter is alluded to in the Preface to the 2d edit. of his Dissert. p. 3."—Mr. O'Connor afterwards died at the age of eighty-two, July 1, 1791. See a well-drawn character of him in the Gentleman's Magazine for August 1791.

Early in this year came out, in two volumes quarto, the posthumous works of the learned Dr. Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester; being "A Commentary, with Notes, on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles," with other theological pieces. Johnson had now an opportunity of making a grateful return to that excellent prelate, who, we have seen, was the only person who gave him any assistance in the compilation of his dictionary. The Bishop had left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions,† and also furnished to the editor, the Reverend Mr. Derby, a Dedication,† which I shall here insert, both because it will appear at this time with peculiar propriety; and because it will tend to propagate and increase that "fervour of *Loyalty*," which in me, who boast of the name of TORY, is not only a principle, but a passion.

"TO THE KING.

"SIR,

"I PRESUME to lay before your Majesty the last labours of a learned Bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards; and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him, makes it now fit to be remembered, that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your Majesty.

"The tumultuary life of Princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest, without losing sight of private merit; to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and the humblest of mankind; and to be at once amiable and great.

"Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it

be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence; and as posterity may learn from your Majesty how Kings should live, may they learn likewise from your people how they should be honoured. I am,

"May it please your Majesty,
"With the most profound respect,
"Your Majesty's
"Most dutiful and devoted,
"Subject and servant."

In the summer he wrote a Prologue* which was spoken before "A Word to the Wise," a comedy by Mr. Hugh Kelly, which had been brought upon the stage in 1770; but he being a writer for ministry in one of the news-papers, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and, in the play-house phrase, was *damned*. By the generosity of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the authour's widow and children. To conciliate the favour of the audience was the intention of Johnson's Prologue, which as it is not long, I shall here insert, as a proof that his poetical talents were in no degree impaired.

"This night presents a play, which publick rage,
Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage:
From zeal or malice, now no more we dread,
For English vengeance *wars not with the dead*.
A generous foe regards with pitying eye
The man whom Fate has laid where all must lie.
To wit, reviving from its authour's dust,
Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just:
Let no renewed hostilities invade
Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade.
Let one great payment every claim appease,
And him who cannot hurt, allow to please;

To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
By harmless merriment, or useful sense.
Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
Approve it only;—'tis too late to praise.
If want of skill or want of care appear,
Forbear to hiss;—the poet cannot hear.
By all, like him, must praise and blame be found,
At last, a fleeting gleam, or empty sound;
Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,
When liberal pity dignified delight;
When pleasure fir'd her torch at virtue's flame,
And mirth was bounty with an humbler name."

A circumstance which could not fail to be very pleasing to Johnson, occurred this year. The Tragedy of "Sir Thomas Overbury," written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought up with alterations at Drury-lane theatre. The Prologue to it was written by Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan; in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

"Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was giv'n
No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heav'n:

he introduced an elegant compliment to Johnson on his Dictionary, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised; of which Mr. Harris, in his "Philological Inquiries,"[1] justly and liberally observes, "Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work." The concluding lines of this Prologue were these:

1 Part First, chap. iv.

"So pleads the tale [1] that gives to future times
The son's misfortunes and the parent's crimes;
There shall his fame (if own'd to-night) survive,
Fix'd by THE HAND THAT BIDS OUR LANGUAGE LIVE."

Mr. Sheridan here at once did honour to his taste and to his liberality of sentiment, by shewing that he was not prejudiced from the unlucky difference which had taken place between his worthy father and Dr. Johnson. I have already mentioned, that Johnson was very desirous of reconciliation with old Mr. Sheridan. It will, therefore, not seem at all surprising that he was zealous in acknowledging the brilliant merit of his son. While it had as yet been displayed only in the drama, Johnson proposed him as a member of THE LITERARY CLUB, observing, that "He who has written the two best comedies of his age, is surely a considerable man." And he had, accordingly, the honour to be elected; for an honour it undoubtedly must be allowed to be, when it is considered of whom that society consists, and that a single black ball excludes a candidate.

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, "July 9, 1777.

"FOR the health of my wife and children I have taken the little country-house at which you visited my uncle, Dr. Boswell, who, having lost his wife, is gone to live with his son. We took possession of our villa about a week ago; we have a garden of three quarters of an acre, well stocked with fruit-trees and flowers, and gooseberries and currants, and pease and beans, and cabbages, &c. &c. and my children are

1 "Life of Richard Savage, by Dr. Johnson."

quite happy. I now write to you in a little study, from the window of which I see around me a verdant grove, and beyond it the lofty mountain called Arthur's Seat.

"Your last letter, in which you desire me to send you some additional information concerning Thomson, reached me very fortunately just as I was going to Lanark, to put my wife's two nephews, the young Campbells, to school there, under the care of Mr. Thomson, the master of it, whose wife is sister to the authour of 'The Seasons.' She is an old woman; but her memory is very good; and she will with pleasure give me for you every particular that you wish to know, and she can tell. Pray then take the trouble to send me such questions as may lead to biographical materials. You say that the Life which we have of Thomson is scanty. Since I received your letter, I have read his Life, published under the name of Cibber, but as you told me, really written by a Mr. Shiels;[1] that written by Dr. Murdoch; one prefixed to an edition of the "Seasons," published at Edinburgh, which is compounded of both, with the addition of an anecdote of Quin's relieving Thomson from prison; the abridgement of Murdoch's account of him, in the 'Biographia Britannica,' and another abridgement of it in the 'Biographical Dictionary,' enriched with Dr. Joseph Warton's critical panegyrick on the 'Seasons' in his 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope:' from all these it appears to me that we have a pretty full account of this poet. However, you will, I doubt not, shew me many blanks, and I shall do what can be done to have them filled up. As Thomson never returned to Scotland (which *you* will think very wise), his sister can speak from her own knowledge only as to the

1 See p. 223, 224, of this volume.

early part of his life. She has some letters from him, which may probably give light as to his more advanced progress, if she will let us see them, which I suppose she will. I believe George Lewis Scott[1] and Dr. Armstrong are now his only surviving companions, while he lived in and about London; and they, I dare say, can tell more of him than is yet known. My own notion is, that Thomson was a much coarser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His 'Seasons' are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments; but a rank soil, nay a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.

"Your edition[2] of the 'English Poets' will be very valuable, on account of the 'Prefaces and Lives.' But I have seen a specimen of an edition of the Poets at the Apollo press, at Edinburgh, which, for excellence in printing and engraving, highly deserves a liberal encouragement.

"Most sincerely do I regret the bad health and bad rest with which you have been afflicted; and I hope you are better. I cannot believe that the prologue which you generously gave to Mr. Kelly's widow and children the other day, is the effusion of one in sickness and in disquietude: but external cir-

1 [George Lewis Scott, Esq. F. R. S., an amiable and learned man, formerly Sub-preceptor to his present Majesty, and afterwards appointed a Commissioner of Excise. He died in 1780. M.]

2 [Dr. Johnson was not the *editor* of this Collection of the English Poets; he merely furnished the biographical prefaces with which it is enriched; as is rightly stated in a subsequent page.

He indeed, from a virtuous motive recommended the works of four or five poets (whom he has named) to be added to the collection; but he is no otherwise answerable for any which are found there, or any which are omitted.—The poems of Goldsmith (whose life I know he intended to write, for I collected some materials for it by his desire), were omitted, in consequence of a petty exclusive interest in some of them, vested in Mr. Carnan, a bookseller. M.]

cumstances are never sure indications of the state of man. I send you a letter which I wrote to you two years ago at Wilton; and did not send it at the time, for fear of being reproved as indulging too much tenderness; and one written to you at the tomb of Melancthon, which I kept back, lest I should appear at once too superstitious and too enthusiastick. I now imagine that perhaps they may please you.

"You do not take the least notice of my proposal for our meeting at Carlisle.[1] Though I have meritoriously refrained from visiting London this year, I ask you if it would not be wrong that I should be two years without having the benefit of your conversation, when, if you come down as far as Derbyshire, we may meet at the expense of a few days journeying, and not many pounds. I wish you to see Carlisle, which made me mention that place. But if you have not a desire to complete your tour of the English cathedrals, I will take a larger share of the road between this place and Ashbourne. So tell me *where* you will fix for our passing a few days by ourselves. Now don't cry 'foolish fellow,' or 'idle dog.' Chain your humour, and let your kindness play.

"You will rejoice to hear that Miss Macleod, of

1 Dr. Johnson had himself talked of our seeing Carlisle together. *High* was a favourite word of his to denote a person of rank. He said to me, "Sir, I believe we may meet at the house of a Roman Catholick lady in Cumberland; a high lady, sir." I afterwards discovered that he meant Mrs. Strickland, sister of Charles Townley, Esq. whose very noble collection of statues and pictures is not more to be admired, than his extraordinary and polite readiness in shewing it, which I and several of my friends have agreeably experienced. They who are possessed of valuable stores of gratification to persons of taste, should exercise their benevolence in imparting the pleasure. Grateful acknowledgements are due to Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq. for the liberal access which he is pleased to allow to his exquisite collection of pictures.

Rasay, is married to Colonel Mure Campbell, an excellent man, with a pretty good estate of his own, and the prospect of having the Earl of Loudoun's fortune and honours. Is not this a noble lot for our fair Hebridean? How happy am I that she is to be in Ayrshire. We shall have the Laird of Rasay, and old Malcolm, and I know not how many gallant Macleods, and bagpipes, &c. &c. at Auchinleck. Perhaps you may meet them all there.

"Without doubt you have read what is called 'The *Life* of David Hume,' written by himself, with the letter from Dr. Adam Smith subjoined to it. Is not this an age of daring effrontery? My friend Mr. Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow, at whose house you and I supped, and to whose care Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, was entrusted at that University, paid me a visit lately; and after we had talked with indignation and contempt of the poisonous productions with which this age is infested, he said there was now an excellent opportunity for Dr. Johnson to step forth. I agreed with him that you might knock Hume's and Smith's heads together, and make vain and ostentatious infidelity exceedingly ridiculous. Would it not be worth your while to crush such noxious weeds in the moral garden?

"You have said nothing to me of Dr. Dodd. I know not how you think on that subject; though the newspapers give us a saying of yours in favour of mercy to him. But I own I am very desirous that the royal prerogative of remission of punishment, should be employed to exhibit an illustrious instance of the regard which GOD's VICEGERENT will ever shew to piety and virtue. If for ten righteous men the ALMIGHTY would have spared Sodom, shall not a thousand acts of goodness done by Dr. Dodd counterbalance one crime? Such an instance would do more to encourage goodness, than his execution would do

to deter from vice. I am not afraid of any bad consequence to society; for who will persevere for a long course of years in a distinguished discharge of religious duties, with a view to commit a forgery with impunity?

"Pray make my best compliments acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by assuring them of my hearty joy that the *Master*, as you call him, is alive. I hope I shall often taste his Champagne—*soberly*.

"I have not heard from Langton for a long time. I suppose he is as usual,

'Studious the busy moments to deceive.'

* * * * * *

"I remain, my dear sir,
"Your most affectionate
"And faithful humble servant,
"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 23d of June, I again wrote to Dr. Johnson, enclosing a ship-master's receipt for a jar of orange-marmalade, and a large packet of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE just received your packet from Mr. Thrale's, but have not daylight enough to look much into it. I am glad that I have credit enough with Lord Hailes to be trusted with more copy. I hope to take more care of it than of the last. I return Mrs. Boswell my affectionate thanks for her present, which I value as a token of reconciliation.

"Poor Dodd was put to death yesterday, in opposition to the recommendation of the jury—the petition of the city of London,—and a subsequent

petition signed by three-and-twenty thousand hands. Surely the voice of the publick, when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.

"The saying that was given me in the papers I never spoke; but I wrote many of his petitions, and some of his letters. He applied to me very often. He was, I am afraid, long flattered with hopes of life; but I had no part in the dreadful delusion; for as soon as the King had signed his sentence, I obtained from Mr. Chamier an account of the disposition of the court towards him, with a declaration that there *was no hope even of a respite*. This letter immediately was laid before Dodd; but he believed those whom he wished to be right, as it is thought, till within three days of his end. He died with pious composure and resolution. I have just seen the Ordinary that attended him. His address to his fellow-convicts offended the Methodists; but he had a Moravian with him much of his time. His moral character is very bad: I hope all is not true that is charged upon him. Of his behaviour in prison an account will be published.

"I give you joy of your country-house, and your pretty garden; and hope some time to see you in your felicity. I was much pleased with your two letters that had been kept so long in store;[1] and re-

1 Since they have been so much honoured by Dr. Johnson, I shall here insert them.

"TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED SIR,

"You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind. You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I resemble Mr. Johnson. You will be agreeably surprised when you learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittemberg in Saxony. I am in the old church where the Reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot

joice at Miss Rasay's advancement, and wish Sir Allan success.

"I hope to meet you somewhere towards the north, but am loath to come quite to Carlisle. Can we not

resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr. Johnson from the tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the Church; but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her 'to keep to the old religion.' At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy: and if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory; and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May GOD, the father of all beings, ever bless you! and may you continue to love

"Your most affectionate friend, and devoted servant,

"Sunday, Sept. 30, 1764." "JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Wilton-house, April 22, 1775.

"EVERY scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me, 'there is no certain happiness in this state of being.' —I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's; and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London we should have a day fixed every week, to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the gaiety which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you; a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and in Parnell's 'Contentment,' I find the only sure means of enjoying happiness; or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection,

"Most faithfully yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

meet at Manchester? But we will settle it in some other letters.

"Mr. Seward,[1] a great favourite at Streatham, has been, I think, enkindled by our travels, with a curiosity to see the Highlands. I have given him letters to you and Beattie. He desires that a lodging may be taken for him at Edinburgh, against his arrival. He is just setting out.

"Langton has been exercising the militia. Mrs. Williams is, I fear, declining. Dr. Lawrence says he can do no more. She is gone to summer in the country, with as many conveniences about her as she can expect; but I have no great hope. We must all die: may we all be prepared!

"I suppose Miss Boswell reads her book, and young Alexander takes to his learning. Let me hear about them; for every thing that belongs to you, belongs in a more remote degree, and not, I hope, very remote, to, dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

"June 28, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"THIS gentleman is a great favourite at Streatham, and therefore you will easily believe that he has very valuable qualities. Our narrative has kindled him with a desire of visiting the Highlands after having already seen a great part of Europe. You

1 William Seward, Esq. F.R.S. editor of "Anecdotes of some distinguished persons," &c. in four volumes, 8vo. well known to a numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literature, love of the fine arts, and social virtues. I am indebted to him for several communications concerning Johnson.

[This gentleman, who was born in 1747, and was educated at the Charter-House, and at Oxford, died in London, April 24, 1799. M.]

must receive him as a friend, and when you have directed him to the curiosities of Edinburgh, give him instructions and recommendations for the rest of his journey. I am, dear sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 24, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson's benevolence to the unfortunate was, I am confident, as steady and active as that of any of those who have been most eminently distinguished for that virtue. Innumerable proofs of it I have no doubt will be for ever concealed from mortal eyes. We may, however, form some judgement of it, from the many and very various instances which have been discovered. One, which happened in the course of this summer, is remarkable from the name and connection of the person who was the object of it. The circumstance to which I allude is ascertained by two letters, one to Mr. Langton, and another to the Reverend Dr. Vyse, rector of Lambeth, son of the respectable clergyman at Lichfield, who was contemporary with Johnson, and in whose father's family Johnson had the happiness of being kindly received in his early years.

"DR. JOHNSON TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE lately been much disordered by a difficulty of breathing, but am now better. I hope your house is well.

"You know we have been talking lately of St. Cross, at Winchester; I have an old acquaintance whose distress makes him very desirous of an hospital, and I am afraid I have not strength enough to get him into the Chartreux. He is a painter, who never

rose higher than to get his immediate living, and from that, at eighty-three, he is disabled by a slight stroke of the palsy, such as does not make him at all helpless on common occasions, though his hand is not steady enough for his art.

"My request is, that you will try to obtain a promise of the next vacancy, from the Bishop of Chester. It is not a great thing to ask, and I hope we shall obtain it. Dr. Warton has promised to favour him with his notice, and I hope he may end his days in peace. I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 29, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE, AT LAMBETH.

"SIR,

"I DOUBT not but you will readily forgive me for taking the liberty of requesting your assistance in recommending an old friend to his Grace the Archbishop as Governor of the Charter-house.

"His name is De Groot; he was born at Gloucester; I have known him many years. He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm in a great degree. He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar can refuse attention; he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him, from whom perhaps every man of learning has learnt something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused. I am, reverend sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"July 9, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

["TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE, AT LAMBETH.

"IF any notice should be taken of the recommendation which I took the liberty of sending you, it

will be necessary to know that Mr. De Groot is to be found at No. 8, in Pye-street, Westminster. This information, when I wrote, I could not give you; and being going soon to Lichfield, think it necessary to be left behind me.

"More I will not say. You will want no persuasion to succour the nephew of Grotius.

"I am, sir,
"Your most humble servant,
"July 22, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."]

"THE REVEREND DR. VYSE TO MR. BOSWELL.

"SIR, "Lambeth, June 9, 1787.

"I HAVE searched in vain for the letter which I spoke of, and which I wished, at your desire, to communicate to you. It was from Dr. Johnson, to return me thanks for my application to Archbishop Cornwallis in favour of poor De Groot. He rejoices at the success it met with, and is lavish in the praise he bestows upon his favourite, Hugo Grotius. I am really sorry that I cannot find this letter, as it is worthy of the writer. That which I send you enclosed,[1] is at your service. It is very short, and will not perhaps be thought of any consequence, unless you should judge proper to consider it as a proof of the very humane part which Dr. Johnson took in behalf of a distressed and deserving person. I am, sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,
"W. VYSE."[2]

1 The preceding letter.

2 [Dr. Vyse, at my request, was so obliging as once more to endeavour to recover the letter of Johnson, to which he alludes, but without success; for April 23, 1800, he wrote to me thus: "I have again searched, but in vain, for one of his letters, in

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. EDWARD DILLY.

"SIR,

"To the collection of English Poets I have recommended the volume of Dr. Watts to be added; his name has long been held by me in veneration, and I would not willingly be reduced to tell of him only that he was born and died. Yet of his life I know very little, and therefore must pass him in a manner very unworthy of his character, unless some of his friends will favour me with the necessary information; many of them must be known to you; and by your influence perhaps I may obtain some instruction: my plan does not exact much; but I wish to distinguish Watts, a man who never wrote but for a good purpose. Be pleased to do for me what you can. I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
July 7, 1777."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Edinburgh, July 15, 1777.

"THE fate of poor Dr. Dodd made a dismal impression upon my mind.

* * * * * * * *

"I had sagacity enough to divine that you wrote his speech to the Recorder, before sentence was pronounced. I am glad you have written so much for

which he speaks in his own nervous style of Hugo Grotius.—De Groot was clearly a descendant of the family of Grotius, and Archbishop Cornwallis willingly complied with Dr. Johnson's request." M.]

him; and I hope to be favoured with an exact list of the several pieces, when we meet.

"I received Mr. Seward as the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and as a gentleman recommended by Dr. Johnson to my attention. I have introduced him to Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Mr. Nairne. He is gone to the Highlands with Dr. Gregory; when he returns, I shall do more for him.

"Sir Allan Maclean has carried that branch of his cause, of which we had good hopes: the President and one other Judge only were against him. I wish the House of Lords may do as well as the Court of Session has done. But Sir Allan has not the lands of *Brolos* quite cleared by this judgement, till a long account is made up of debts and interests on the one side, and rents on the other. I am, however, not much afraid of the balance.

"Macquarry's estates, Staffa and all, were sold yesterday, and bought by a Campbell. I fear he will have little or nothing left out of the purchase money.

"I send you the case against the negro, by Mr. Cullen, son to Dr. Cullen, in opposition to Maclaurin's for liberty, of which you have approved. Pray read this, and tell me what you think as a *Politician*, as well as a *Poet*, upon the subject.

"Be so kind as to let me know how your time is to be distributed next autumn. I will meet you at Manchester, or where you please; but I wish you would complete your tour of the cathedrals, and come to Carlisle, and I will accompany you a part of the way homewards. I am ever,

"Most faithfully yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI ... TANJORE

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOUR notion of the necessity of an yearly interview is very pleasing to both my vanity and tenderness. I shall, perhaps, come to Carlisle another year; but my money has not held out so well as it used to do. I shall go to Ashbourne, and I purpose to make Dr. Taylor invite you. If you live awhile with me at his house, we shall have much time to ourselves, and our stay will be no expense to us or him. I shall leave London the 28th; and after some stay at Oxford and Lichfield, shall probably come to Ashbourne about the end of your Session; but of all this you shall have notice. Be satisfied we will meet somewhere.

"What passed between me and poor Dr. Dodd, you shall know more fully when we meet.

"Of law-suits there is no end; poor Sir Allan must have another trial, for which, however, his antagonist cannot be much blamed, having two Judges on his side. I am more afraid of the debts than of the House of Lords. It is scarcely to be imagined to what debts will swell, that are daily increasing by small additions, and how carelessly in a state of desperation debts are contracted. Poor Macquarry was far from thinking that when he sold his islands he should receive nothing. For what were they sold? And what was their yearly value? The admission of money into the Highlands will soon put an end to the feudal modes of life, by making those men landlords who were not chiefs. I do not know that the people will suffer by the change; but there was in the patriarchal authority something venerable and pleasing. Every eye must look with pain on a *Camp-*

bell turning the *Macquarries* at will out of their *sedes avitæ*, their hereditary island.

"Sir Alexander Dick is the only Scotsman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees, where trees were not. I was much delighted by his kind letter.

"I remember Rasay with too much pleasure not to partake of the happiness of any part of that amiable family. Our ramble in the islands hangs upon my imagination; I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again. Pennant seems to have seen a great deal which we did not see: when we travel again, let us look better about us.

"You have done right in taking your uncle's house. Some change in the form of life, gives from time to time a new epocha of existence. In a new place there is something new to be done, and a different system of thoughts rises in the mind. I wish I could gather currants in your garden. Now fit up a little study, and have your books ready at hand; do not spare a little money, to make your habitation pleasing to yourself.

"I have dined lately with poor dear ——. I do not think he goes on well. His table is rather coarse, and he has his children too much about him.[1] But he is a very good man.

"Mrs. Williams is in the country, to try if she can improve her health; she is very ill. Matters

1 This very just remark I hope will be constantly held in remembrance by parents, who are in general too apt to indulge their own fond feelings for their children at the expense of their friends. The common custom of introducing them after dinner is highly injudicious. It is agreeable enough that they should appear at any other time; but they should not be suffered to poison the moments of festivity by attracting the attention of the company, and in a manner compelling them from politeness to say what they do not think.

have come so about, that she is in the country with very good accommodation; but age, and sickness, and pride, have made her so peevish, that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her, by a secret stipulation of half a crown a week over her wages.

"Our CLUB ended its session about six weeks ago. We now only meet to dine once a fortnight. Mr. Dunning, the great lawyer, is one of our members. The Thrales are well.

"I long to know how the Negro's cause will be decided. What is the opinion of Lord Auchinleck, or Lord Hailes, or Lord Monboddo? I am, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate, &c.

"July 22, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"MADAM,

"THOUGH I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it. I received it as a token of friendship, as a proof of reconciliation, things much sweeter than sweetmeats, and upon this consideration I return you, dear madam, my sincerest thanks. By having your kindness I think I have a double security for the continuance of Mr. Boswell's, which it is not to be expected that any man can long keep, when the influence of a lady so highly and so justly valued operates against him. Mr. Boswell will tell you that I was always faithful to your interest, and always endeavoured to exalt you in his estimation. You must now do the same for me. We must all help one another, and you must now consider me as, dear madam,

"Your most obliged

"And most humble servant,

"July 22, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Edinburgh, July 28, 1777.

"THIS is the day on which you were to leave London, and I have been amusing myself in the intervals of my law-drudgery, with figuring you in the Oxford post-coach. I doubt, however, if you have had so merry a journey as you and I had in that vehicle last year, when you made so much sport with Gwyn, the architect. Incidents upon a journey are recollected with peculiar pleasure; they are preserved in brisk spirits, and come up again in our minds, tinctured with that gaiety, or at least that animation with which we first perceived them."

* * * * * *

[I added, that something had occurred, which I was afraid might prevent me from meeting him; and that my wife had been affected with complaints which threatened a consumption, but was now better.]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"Do not disturb yourself about our interviews; I hope we shall have many; nor think it any thing hard or unusual, that your design of meeting me is interrupted. We have both endured greater evils, and have greater evils to expect.

"Mrs. Boswell's illness makes a more serious distress. Does the blood rise from her lungs or from her stomach? From little vessels broken in the stomach there is no danger. Blood from the lungs is, I believe, always frothy, as mixed with wind. Your physicians know very well what is to be done. The loss of such a lady would, indeed, be very afflictive, and I

hope she is in no danger. Take care to keep her mind as easy as is possible.

"I have left Langton in London. He has been down with the militia, and is again quiet at home, talking to his little people, as, I suppose, you do sometimes. Make my compliments to Miss Veronica.[1] The rest are too young for ceremony.

"I cannot but hope that you have taken your country-house at a very seasonable time, and that it may conduce to restore or establish Mrs. Boswell's health, as well as provide room and exercise for the young ones. That you and your lady may both be happy, and long enjoy your happiness, is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear sir,

"Your most, &c.

"Oxford, Aug. 4, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

[Informing him that my wife had continued to grow better, so that my alarming apprehensions were relieved; and that I hoped to disengage myself from the other embarrassment which had occurred, and therefore requesting to know particularly when he intended to be at Ashbourne.]

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM this day come to Ashbourne, and have only to tell you, that Dr. Taylor says you shall be welcome to him, and you know how welcome you will be to me. Make haste to let me know when you may be expected.

1 [This young lady, the authour's eldest daughter, and at this time about five years old, died in London, of a consumption, four months after her father, Sept. 26, 1795. M.]

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her, I hope we shall be at variance no more. I am, dear sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Aug. 30, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"ON Saturday I wrote a very short letter, immediately upon my arrival hither, to shew you that I am not less desirous of the interview than yourself. Life admits not of delays; when pleasure can be had, it is fit to catch it: every hour takes away part of the things that please us, and perhaps part of our disposition to be pleased. When I came to Lichfield, I found my old friend Harry Jackson dead. It was a loss, and a loss not to be repaired, as he was one of the companions of my childhood. I hope we may long continue to gain friends; but the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us are not able to supply the place of old acquaintance, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight. If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean Journey.

"In the mean time it may not be amiss to contrive some other little adventure, but what it can be I know not; leave it, as Sidney says,

'To virtue, fortune, time, and woman's breast;'[1]

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1 [By an odd mistake, in the first three editions we find a reading in this line, to which Dr. Johnson would by no means have subscribed; *wine* having been substituted for *time*. That errour probably was a mistake in the transcript of Johnson's original letter, his hand-writing being often very difficult to read. The

for I believe Mrs. Boswell must have some part in the consultation.

other deviation in the beginning of the line (*virtue* instead of *nature*) must be attributed to his memory having deceived him; and therefore has not been disturbed.

The verse quoted is the concluding line of a sonnet of Sidney's, of which the earliest copy, I believe, is found in Harrington's translation of Ariosto, 1591, in the notes on the eleventh book:—"And therefore," says he, "that excellent verse of Sir Philip Sidney in his first ARCADIA, which I know not by what mishap is left out in the printed booke, [4to. 1590,] is in mine opinion worthie to be praised and followed, to make a good and virtuous wife:

'Who doth desire that chast his wife should bee,
First be he true, for truth doth truth deserve;
Then be he such, as she his worth may see,
And, alwaies one, credit with her preserve:
Not toying kynd, nor causelessly unkynd,
Not stirring thoughts, nor yet denying right,
Not spying faults, nor in plaine errors blind,
Never hard hand, nor ever rayns [reins] too light;
As far from want, as far from vaine expence,
Th' one doth enforce, the t'other doth entice:
Allow good companie, but drive from thence
All filthie mouths that glorie in their vice:
This done, thou hast no more but leave the rest
To *nature*, fortune, *time*, and woman's breast.'"

I take this opportunity to add, that in ENGLAND'S PARNASSUS, a collection of poetry printed in 1600, the second couplet of this sonnet is thus corruptly exhibited:

"Then *he be* such as *he* his *words* may see,
And alwaies one credit *which* her preserve:"

a variation, which I the rather mention, because the readings of that book have been triumphantly quoted, when they happened to coincide with the sophistications of the SECOND folio edition of Shakspeare's plays in 1632, as adding I know not what degree of authority and authenticity to the latter: as if the corruptions of one book (and that abounding with the grossest falsifications of the authours from whose works its extracts are made) could give any kind of support to another, which in every page is still more adulterated and unfaithful. M.]

"One thing you will like. The Doctor, so far as I can judge, is likely to leave us enough to ourselves. He was out to-day before I came down, and, I fancy, will stay out to dinner. I have brought the papers about poor Dodd, to shew you, but you will soon have despatched them.

"Before I came away, I sent poor Mrs. Williams into the country, very ill of a pituitous defluxion, which wastes her gradually away, and which her physician declares himself unable to stop. I supplied her as far as could be desired, with all conveniences to make her excursion and abode pleasant and useful. But I am afraid she can only linger a short time in a morbid state of weakness and pain.

"The Thrales, little and great, are all well, and purpose to go to Brighthelmstone at Michaelmas. They will invite me to go with them, and perhaps I may go, but I hardly think I shall like to stay the whole time; but of futurity we know but little.

"Mrs. Porter is well; but Mrs. Aston, one of the ladies at Stowhill, has been struck with a palsy, from which she is not likely ever to recover. How soon may such a stroke fall upon us!

"Write to me, and let us know when we may expect you. I am, dear sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Ashbourne, Sept. 1, 1777." "Sam. Johnson."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 9, 1777.

[After informing him that I was to set out next day, in order to meet him at Ashbourne:—]

"I have a present for you from Lord Hailes; the fifth book of 'Lactantius,' which he has published with Latin notes. He is also to give you a few anecdotes for your 'Life of Thomson,' who I find was

private tutor to the present Earl of Hadington, Lord Hailes's cousin, a circumstance not mentioned by Dr. Murdoch. I have keen expectations of delight from your edition of the English Poets.[1]

"I am sorry for poor Mrs. Williams's situation. You will, however, have the comfort of reflecting on your kindness to her. Mr. Jackson's death, and Mrs. Aston's palsy, are gloomy circumstances. Yet surely we should be habituated to the uncertainty of life and health. When my mind is unclouded by melancholy, I consider the temporary distresses of this state of being, as "light afflictions," by stretching my mental view into that glorious after-existence, when they will appear to be as nothing. But present pleasures and present pains must be felt. I lately read 'Rasselas' over again with great satisfaction.

"Since you are desirous to hear about Macquarry's sale, I shall inform you particularly. The gentleman who purchased Ulva, is Mr. Campbell, of Auchnaba: our friend Macquarry was proprietor of two-thirds of it, of which the rent was 156*l.* 5*s.* 1½*d.* This parcel was set up at 4,069*l.* 5*s.* 1*d.* but it sold for no less than 5,540*l.* The other third of Ulva, with the island of Staffa, belonged to Macquarry of Ormaig. Its rent, including that of Staffa, 83*l.* 12*s.* 2½*d.* —set up at 2,178*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*—sold for no less than 3,540*l.* The Laird of Col wished to purchase Ulva, but he thought the price too high. There may, indeed, be great improvements made there, both in fishing and agriculture; but the interest of the purchase-money exceeds the rent so very much, that I doubt if the bargain will be profitable. There is an island called Little Colonsay, of 10*l.* yearly rent, which I am informed has belonged to the Macquarrys of Ulva for many ages, but which was lately

1 [See p. 312. n. M.]

claimed by the Presbyterian Synod of Argyll, in consequence of a grant made to them by Queen Anne. It is believed that their claim will be dismissed, and that Little Colonsay will also be sold for the advantage of Macquarry's creditors. What think you of purchasing this island, and endowing a school or college there, the master to be a clergyman of the Church of England? How venerable would such an institution make the name of DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in the Hebrides! I have, like yourself, a wonderful pleasure in recollecting our travels in those islands. The pleasure is, I think, greater than it reasonably should be, considering that we had not much either of beauty or elegance to charm our imaginations, or of rude novelty to astonish. Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltick.[1] I am sorry you

1 It appears that Johnson, now in his sixty-eighth year, was seriously inclined to realize the project of our going up the Baltick, which I had started when we were in the isle of Sky; for he thus writes to Mrs. Thrale; Letters, Vol. I. page 366:

"Ashbourne, Sep. 13, 1777.

"BOSWELL, I believe, is coming. He talks of being here to-day: I shall be glad to see him: but he shrinks from the Baltick expedition, which, I think, is the best scheme in our power: what we shall substitute, I know not. He wants to see Wales; but, except the woods of *Bachycraigh*, what is there in Wales, that can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity? We may, perhaps, form some scheme or other: but, in the phrase of *Hockley in the Hole*, it is pity he has not a *better bottom.*"

Such an ardour of mind, and vigour of enterprise, is admirable at any age: but more particularly so at the advanced period at which Johnson was then arrived. I am sorry now that I did not insist on our executing that scheme. Besides the other objects of curiosity and observation, to have seen my illustrious friend received, as he probably would have been, by a prince so eminently distinguished for his variety of talents and acquisitions as the late

have already been in Wales; for I wish to see it. Shall we go to Ireland, of which I have seen but little? We shall try to strike out a plan when we are at Ashbourne. I am ever

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I WRITE to be left at Carlisle, as you direct me; but you cannot have it. Your letter, dated Sept. 6, was not at this place till this day, Thursday, Sept. 11; and I hope you will be here before this is at Carlisle.[1] However, what you have not going, you may have returning; and as I believe I shall not love you less after our interview, it will then be as true as it is now, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and count your kindness as one of the chief felicities of my life. Do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write; nor has any man at all times something to say.

"That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge; and, if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal.

King of Sweden; and by the Empress of Russia, whose extraordinary abilities, information, and magnanimity, astonish the world, would have afforded a noble subject for contemplation and record. This reflection may possibly be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold-blooded part of my readers; yet I own, I frequently indulge it with an earnest, unavailing regret.

1 It so happened. The letter was forwarded to my house at Edinburgh.

Suspicion is very often an useless pain. From that, and all other pains, I wish you free and safe; for I am, dear sir,

"Most affectionately yours,

"Ashbourne, Sept. 11, 1777." "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Sunday evening, Sept. 14, I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr. Taylor's door. Dr. Johnson and he appeared before I had got out of the post-chaise, and welcomed me cordially.

I told them that I had travelled all the preceding night, and gone to bed at Leek in Staffordshire; and that when I rose to go to church in the afternoon, I was informed there had been an earthquake, of which, it seems, the shock had been felt in some degree at Ashbourne. JOHNSON. "Sir, it will be much exaggerated in popular talk: for, in the first place, the common people do not accurately adapt their thoughts to the objects; nor, secondly, do they accurately adapt their words to their thoughts: they do not mean to lie; but, taking no pains to be exact, they give you very false accounts. A great part of their language is proverbial. If any thing rocks at all, they say *it rocks like a cradle;* and in this way they go on."

The subject of grief for the loss of relations and friends being introduced, I observed that it was strange to consider how soon it in general wears away. Dr. Taylor mentioned a gentleman of the neighbourhood as the only instance he had ever known of a person who had endeavoured to *retain* grief. He told Dr. Taylor, that after his Lady's death, which affected him deeply, he *resolved* that the grief, which he cherished with a kind of sacred fondness, should be lasting; but that he found he could not keep it long. JOHNSON. "All grief for what cannot in the course of nature be helped, soon wears away; in some

sooner, indeed, in some later; but it never continues very long, unless where there is madness, such as will make a man have pride so fixed in his mind, as to imagine himself a king; or any other passion in an unreasonable way: for all unnecessary grief is unwise, and therefore will not be long retained by a sound mind. If, indeed, the cause of our grief is occasioned by our own misconduct, if grief is mingled with remorse of conscience, it should be lasting." BOSWELL. "But, sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend." JOHNSON. "Sir, we disapprove of him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better; but because we suppose, that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not had much affection for them."

I was somewhat disappointed in finding that the edition of the English Poets, for which he was to write Prefaces and Lives, was not an undertaking directed by him: but that he was to furnish a Preface and Life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON. "Yes, sir; and *say* he was a dunce." My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.

On Monday, September 15, Dr. Johnson observed, that every body commended such parts of his "Journey to the Western Islands" as were in their own way. "For instance (said he), Mr. Jackson (the all-knowing) told me there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of language; Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries."

After breakfast, Johnson carried me to see the garden belonging to the school of Ashbourne, which

is very prettily formed upon a bank, rising gradually behind the house. The Reverend Mr. Langley, the head-master, accompanied us.

While we sat basking in the sun upon a seat here, I introduced a common subject of complaint, the very small salaries which many curates have, and I maintained, that no man should be invested with the character of a clergyman, unless he has a security for such an income as will enable him to appear respectable; that, therefore, a clergyman should not be allowed to have a curate, unless he gives him a hundred pounds a year; if he cannot do that, let him perform the duty himself. JOHNSON. "To be sure, sir, it is wrong that any clergyman should be without a reasonable income; but as the church revenues were sadly diminished at the Reformation, the clergy who have livings, cannot afford, in many instances, to give good salaries to curates, without leaving themselves too little; and, if no curate were to be permitted unless he had a hundred pounds a year, their number would be very small, which would be a disadvantage, as then there would not be such choice in the nursery for the church, curates being candidates for the higher ecclesiastical offices, according to their merit and good behaviour." He explained the system of the English Hierarchy exceedingly well. "It is not thought fit (said he) to trust a man with the care of a parish till he has given proof as a curate that he shall deserve such a trust." This is an excellent *theory:* and if the *practice* were according to it, the Church of England would be admirable indeed. However, as I have heard Dr. Johnson observe as to the Universities, bad practice does not infer that the *constitution* is bad.

We had with us at dinner several of Dr. Taylor's neighbours, good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr. Johnson very well, and not to con-

sider him in the light that a certain person did, who being struck, or rather stunned by his voice and manner, when he was afterwards asked what he thought of him, answered, "He's a tremendous companion."

Johnson told me, that "Taylor was a very sensible acute man, and had a strong mind; that he had great activity in some respects, and yet such a sort of indolence, that if you should put a pebble upon his chimney-piece, you would find it there, in the same state, a year afterwards."

And here is a proper place to give an account of Johnson's humane and zealous interference in behalf of the Reverend Dr. William Dodd, formerly Prebendary of Brecon, and chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty; celebrated as a very popular preacher, an encourager of charitable institutions, and authour of a variety of works, chiefly theological. Having unhappily contracted expensive habits of living, partly occasioned by licentiousness of manners, he in an evil hour, when pressed by want of money, and dreading an exposure of his circumstances, forged a bond of which he attempted to avail himself to support his credit, flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected. The person, whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify, was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who, he perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have generously paid the money in case of an alarm being taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country; but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.

Johnson told me that Dr. Dodd was very little acquainted with him, having been but once in his company, many years previous to this period (which was precisely the state of my own acquaintance with Dodd); but in his distress he bethought himself of Johnson's persuasive power of writing, if haply it might avail to obtain for him the Royal Mercy. He did not apply to him directly, but, extraordinary as it may seem, through the late Countess of Harrington,[1] who wrote a letter to Johnson, asking him to employ his pen in favour of Dodd. Mr. Allen, the printer, who was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt-court, and for whom he had much kindness, was one of Dodd's friends, of whom, to the credit of humanity be it recorded, that he had many who did not desert him, even after his infringement of the law had reduced him to the state of a man under sentence of death. Mr. Allen told me that he carried Lady Harrington's letter to Johnson, that Johnson read it walking up and down his chamber, and seemed much agitated, after which he said, "I will do what I can;—" and certainly he did make extraordinary exertions.

He this evening, as he had obligingly promised in one of his letters, put into my hands the whole series of his writings upon this melancholy occasion, and I shall present my readers with the abstract which I made from the collection; in doing which I studied to avoid copying what had appeared in print, and now make part of the edition of "Johnson's Works," published by the Booksellers of London, but taking care to mark Johnson's variations in some of the pieces there exhibited.

Dr. Johnson wrote in the first place, Dr. Dodd's

1 [Caroline, eldest daughter of Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, and wife of William, the second Earl of Harrington. M.]

"Speech to the Recorder of London," at the Old Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren," a sermon delivered by Dr. Dodd, in the chapel of Newgate. According to Johnson's manuscript it began thus after the text, *What shall I do to be saved?*—"These were the words with which the keeper, to whose custody Paul and Silas were committed by their prosecutors, addressed his prisoners, when he saw them freed from their bonds by the perceptible agency of divine favour, and was, therefore, irresistibly convinced that they were not offenders against the laws, but martyrs to the truth."

Dr. Johnson was so good as to mark for me with his own hand, on a copy of this sermon which is now in my possession, such passages as were added by Dr. Dodd. They are not many: whoever will take the trouble to look at the printed copy, and attend to what I mention, will be satisfied of this.

There is a short introduction by Dr. Dodd, and he also inserted this sentence, "You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you;—no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves." The *notes* are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words, "the thief whom he pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr. Dodd himself.

The other pieces mentioned by Johnson in the above-mentioned collection, are two letters, one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst, (not Lord North, as is erroneously supposed), and one to Lord Mansfield;—A Petition from Dr. Dodd to the King;—A Petition from Mrs. Dodd to the Queen;—Observations of some length inserted in the news-papers, on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his

Majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd, signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He told me that he had also written a petition from the city of London; "but (said he, with a significant smile) they *mended* it."[1]

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is "Dr. Dodd's last solemn Declaration," which he left with the sheriff at the place of execution. Here also my friend marked the variations on a copy of that piece now in my possession. Dodd inserted, "I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful œconomy;" and in the next sentence he introduced the words which I

1 Having unexpectedly, by the favour of Mr. Stone, of London Field, Hackney, seen the original in Johnson's hand-writing, of "The Petition of the City of London to his Majesty, in favour of Dr. Dodd," I now present it to my readers, with such passages as were omitted, inclosed in crotchets, and the additions or variations marked in Italicks.

"That William Dodd, Doctor of Laws, now lying under sentence of death *in your Majesty's gaol of Newgate*, for the crime of forgery, has for a great part of his life set a useful and laudable example of diligence in his calling, [and as we have reason to believe, has exercised his ministry with great fidelity and efficacy], *which, in many instances, has produced the most happy effect.*

"That he has been the first institutor, [or] *and* a very earnest and active promoter of several modes of useful charity, and [that] therefore [he] may be considered as having been on many occasions a benefactor to the publick.

"[That when they consider his past life, they are willing to suppose his late crime to have been not the consequence of habitual depravity, but the suggestion of some sudden and violent temptation.]

"[That] *Your Petitioners* therefore considering his case, as in some of its circumstances unprecedented and peculiar, *and encouraged by your Majesty's known clemency*, [they] most humbly recommend the said William Dodd to [his] *your* Majesty's most gracious consideration, in hopes that he will be found not altogether [unfit] *unworthy* to stand an example of Royal Mercy."

distinguish by *Italicks;* "My life for some *few unhappy* years past has been *dreadfully erroneous.*" Johnson's expression was *hypocritical;* but his remark on the margin is "With this he said he could not charge himself."

Having thus authentically settled what part of the "Occasional Papers," concerning Dr. Dodd's miserable situation, came from the pen of Johnson, I shall proceed to present my readers with my record of the unpublished writings relating to that extraordinary and interesting matter.

I found a letter to Dr. Johnson from Dr. Dodd, May 23, 1777, in which, "The Convict's Address", seems clearly to be meant:

"I am so penetrated, my ever dear sir, with a sense of your extreme benevolence towards me, that I cannot find words equal to the sentiments of my heart. * * * *

"You are too conversant in the world to need the slightest hint from me, of what infinite utility the Speech[1] on the awful day has been to me. I experience, every hour, some good effect from it. I am sure that effects still more salutary and important must follow from *your kind and intended favour.* I will labour—God being my helper—to do justice to it from the pulpit. I am sure, had I your sentiments constantly to deliver from thence, in all their mighty force and power, not a soul could be left unconvinced and unpersuaded." * * * * * *

He added, "May God Almighty bless and reward, with his choicest comforts, your philanthropick actions, and enable me at all times to express what I feel of the high and uncommon obligations which I owe to the *first man* in our times."

1 His speech at the Old Bailey, when found guilty.

On Sunday, June 22, he writes, begging Dr. Johnson's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his Majesty:

"If his Majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrours and ignominy of a *publick death,* which the *publick* itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled."

This letter was brought to Dr. Johnson when in church. He stooped down and read it, and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr. Dodd to the King:

"SIR,

"MAY it not offend your Majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge; that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your Laws and Judges have condemned to the horrour and ignominy of a publick execution.

"I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example. Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity; but humbly hope, that publick security may be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

"My life, sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against GOD are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance. Preserve me, sir, by your prerogative

of mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal, before which Kings and Subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude for the life and happiness of your Majesty. I am, sir,

"Your Majesty's, &c."

Subjoined to it was written as follows:

"TO DR. DODD.

"SIR,

"I MOST seriously enjoin you not to let it be at all known that I have written this letter, and to return the copy to Mr. Allen in a cover to me. I hope I need not tell you, that I wish it success.—But do not indulge hope.—Tell nobody."

It happened luckily that Mr. Allen was pitched on to assist in this melancholy office, for he was a great friend of Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate. Dr. Johnson never went to see Dr. Dodd. He said to me, "it would have done *him* more harm, than good to Dodd, who once expressed a desire to see him, but not earnestly."

Dr. Johnson, on the 20th of June, wrote the following letter:

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES JENKINSON.

"SIR,

"SINCE the conviction and condemnation of Dr. Dodd, I have had, by the intervention of a

friend, some intercourse with him, and I am sure I shall lose nothing in your opinion by tenderness and commiseration. Whatever be the crime, it is not easy to have any knowledge of the delinquent, without a wish that his life may be spared; at least when no life has been taken away by him. I will, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting some reasons for which I wish this unhappy being to escape the utmost rigour of his sentence.

"He is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our church who has suffered publick execution for immorality; and I know not whether it would not be more for the interests of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy.

"The supreme power has, in all ages, paid some attention to the voice of the people; and that voice does not least deserve to be heard, when it calls out for mercy. There is now a very general desire that Dodd's life should be spared. More is not wished; and, perhaps, this is not too much to be granted.

"If you, sir, have any opportunity of enforcing these reasons, you may, perhaps, think them worthy of consideration: but whatever you determine, I most respectfully intreat that you will be pleased to pardon for this intrusion, sir,

"Your most obedient
"And most humble servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

It has been confidently circulated, with invidious remarks, that to this letter no attention whatever was paid by Mr. Jenkinson, (afterwards Earl of Liverpool); and that he did not even deign to shew the

common civility of owning the receipt of it. I could not but wonder at such conduct in the noble Lord, whose own character and just elevation in life, I thought, must have impressed him with all due regard for great abilities and attainments. As the story had been much talked of, and apparently from good authority, I could not but have animadverted upon it in this work, had it been as was alleged; but from my earnest love of truth, and having found reason to think that there might be a mistake, I presumed to write to his Lordship, requesting an explanation; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I am enabled to assure the world, that there is no foundation for it, the fact being, that owing to some neglect, or accident, Johnson's letter never came to Lord Hawkesbury's hands. I should have thought it strange indeed, if that noble Lord had undervalued my illustrious friend; but instead of this being the case, his Lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased immediately to honour me, thus expresses himself:—"I have always respected the memory of Dr. Johnson, and admire his writings; and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement."

All applications for the Royal Mercy having failed, Dr. Dodd prepared himself for death; and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr. Johnson as follows:

June 25, *Midnight.*

"Accept, thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf.—Oh! Dr. Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man!—I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest

transports—the infelt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transports, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my Comforter, my Advocate, and my *Friend!* God *be ever* with *you!*"

Dr. Johnson lastly wrote to Dr. Dodd this solemn and soothing letter:

"TO THE REVEREND DR. DODD.

"DEAR SIR,

"That which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles; it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty, and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

"In requital of those well intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear sir,

"Your most affectionate servant,

"June 26, 1777." "Sam. Johnson."

Under the copy of this letter I found written, in Johnson's own hand, "Next day, June 27, he was executed."

To conclude this interesting episode with an use-

ful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the "Occasional Papers," concerning the unfortunate Dr. Dodd.—"Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his publick ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine, did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

"Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them, by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude."[1]

Johnson gave us this evening, in his happy discriminative manner, a portrait of the late Mr. Fitzherbert of Derbyshire. "There was (said he) no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Every body liked him; but he had no friend, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate

1 [See Dr. Johnson's final opinion concerning Dr. Dodd, under April 18, 1783. M.]

thoughts. People were willing to think well of every thing about him. A gentleman was making an affected rant, as many people do, of great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London; how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him. 'Can't you (said Fitzherbert), take a post-chaise and go to him?' This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it.[1] However, this was circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too; a proof that he was no very witty man. He was an instance of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive; by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight. In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this, by saying many things to please him."

Tuesday, September 16, Dr. Johnson having mentioned to me the extraordinary size and price of some cattle reared by Dr. Taylor, I rode out with our host, surveyed his farm, and was shewn one cow which he had sold for a hundred and twenty guineas, and another for which he had been offered a hundred and thirty. Taylor thus described to me his old schoolfellow and friend, Johnson: "He is a man of a

1 Dr. Gisborne, Physician to his Majesty's Household, has obligingly communicated to me a fuller account of this story than had reached Dr. Johnson. The affected gentleman was the late John Gilbert Cooper, Esq. authour of a Life of Socrates, and of some poems in Dodsley's collection. Mr. Fitzherbert found him one morning, apparently, in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his son, as to seem beyond the power of comfort. At length, however, he exclaimed, "I will write an Elegy." Mr. Fitzherbert being satisfied, by this, of the sincerity of his emotions, slyly said, "Had not you better take a post-chaise and go and see him?" It was the shrewdness of the insinuation which made the story be circulated.

very clear head, great power of words, and a very gay imagination; but there is no disputing with him. He will not hear you, and having a louder voice than you, must roar you down."

In the afternoon I tried to get Dr. Johnson to like the Poems of Mr. Hamilton of Bangour, which I had brought with me: I had been much pleased with them at a very early age: the impression still remained on my mind; it was confirmed by the opinion of my friend the Honourable Andrew Erskine, himself both a good poet and a good critick, who thought Hamilton as true a poet as ever wrote, and that his not having fame was unaccountable. Johnson, upon repeated occasions, while I was at Ashbourne, talked slightingly of Hamilton. He said there was no power of thinking in his verses, nothing that strikes one, nothing better than what you generally find in magazines; and that the highest praise they deserved was, that they were very well for a gentleman to hand about among his friends. He said the imitation of *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor, &c.* was too solemn; he read part of it at the beginning. He read the beautiful pathetick song, "Ah the poor shepherd's mournful fate," and did not seem to give attention to what I had been used to think tender elegant strains, but laughed at the rhyme, in Scotch pronunciation, *wishes* and *blushes*, reading *wushes*—and there he stopped. He owned that the epitaph on Lord Newhall was pretty well done. He read the "Inscription in a Summer-house," and a little of the imitations of Horace's Epistles; but said he found nothing to make him desire to read on. When I urged that there were some good poetical passages in the book, "Where (said he), will you find so large a collection without some?" I thought the description of Winter might obtain his approbation:

"See Winter from the frozen north
Drives his iron chariot forth!
His grisly hand in icy chains
Fair Tweeda's silver flood constrains," &c.

He asked why an "*iron* chariot?" and said "icy chains" was an old image. I was struck with the uncertainty of taste, and somewhat sorry that a poet whom I had long read with fondness, was not approved by Dr. Johnson. I comforted myself with thinking that the beauties were too delicate for his robust perceptions. Garrick maintained that he had not a taste for the finest productions of genius: but I was sensible, that when he took the trouble to analyse critically, he generally convinced us that he was right.

In the evening the Reverend Mr. Seward, of Lichfield, who was passing through Ashbourne in his way home, drank tea with us. Johnson described him thus:—"Sir, his ambition is to be a fine talker; so he goes to Buxton, and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him. And, sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves. I do not know a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may do any thing that is for his ease, and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms: sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty."

Dr. Taylor's nose happening to bleed, he said, it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval. Dr. Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physick, disapproved much of periodical bleeding. "For (said he) you accustom yourself to an evacuation which Nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you from forgetfulness or any other cause omit it; so you may be suddenly suf-

focated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacuations, because should you omit them, Nature can supply the omission; but Nature cannot open a vein to blood you."[1]—"I do not like to take an emetick (said Taylor), for fear of breaking some small vessels."—"Poh! (said Johnson), if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels:" (blowing with high derision).

I mentioned to Dr. Johnson, that David Hume's persisting in his infidelity, when he was dying, shocked me much. JOHNSON. "Why should it shock you, sir? Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless GOD should send an angel to set him right." I said, I had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. JOHNSON. "It was not so, sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease, than so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go), into an unknown state, and not being uneasy at leaving all he knew. And you are to consider, that upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive to speak the truth." The horrour of death which I had always observed in Dr. Johnson, appeared strong to-night. I ventured to tell him, that I had been, for moments in my life, not afraid of

1 [Nature, however, may supply the evacuation by an hæmorrhage. K.]

death; therefore I could suppose another man in that state of mind for a considerable space of time. He said, "he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him." He added, that it had been observed, that scarce any man dies in publick, but with apparent resolution; from that desire of praise which never quits us. I said, Dr. Dodd seemed to be willing to die, and full of hopes of happiness. "Sir (said he), Dr. Dodd would have given both his hands and both his legs to have lived. The better a man is, the more afraid is he of death, having a clearer view of infinite purity." He owned, that our being in an unhappy uncertainty as to our salvation, was mysterious; and said, "Ah! we must wait till we are in another state of being, to have many things explained to us." Even the powerful mind of Johnson seemed foiled by futurity. But I thought, that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation, being mingled with hope, was yet more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity. A man can live in thick air, but perishes in an exhausted receiver.

Dr. Johnson was much pleased with a remark which I told him was made to me by General Paoli:—"That it is impossible not to be afraid of death; and that those who at the time of dying are not afraid, are not thinking of death, but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight: so that all men are equally afraid of death when they see it; only some have a power of turning their sight away from it better than others."

On Wednesday, September 17, Dr. Butter, physician at Derby, drank tea with us; and it was settled that Dr. Johnson and I should go on Friday and dine with him. Johnson said, "I'm glad of this." He seemed weary of the uniformity of life at Dr. Taylor's.

Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life, a

man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities: the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned; for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnell drank too freely; for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this; so that more ill may be done by the example, than good by telling the whole truth." Here was an instance of his varying from himself in talk; for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr. Johnson maintained, that "If a man is to write *A Panegyrick,* he may keep vices out of sight; but if he professes to write *A Life,* he must represent it really as it was:" and when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnell drank to excess, he said, that "it would produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen, that even the learning and genius of Parnell could be debased by it." And in the Hebrides he maintained, as appears from my "Journal,"[1] that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults, if he writes his life.

He had this evening, partly, I suppose, from the spirit of contradiction to his Whig friend, a violent argument with Dr. Taylor, as to the inclinations of the people of England at this time towards the Royal Family of Stuart. He grew so outrageous as to say, "that, if England were fairly polled, the present King would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow." Taylor, who was as violent a Whig as Johnson was a Tory, was roused by this to a pitch of bellowing. He denied, loudly, what Johnson said; and maintained, that there was an abhorrence against the Stuart family, though he admitted

1 Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 3d edit. p. 240.

that the people were not much attached to the present King.[1] JOHNSON. "Sir, the state of the country is this: the people knowing it to be agreed on all hands that this King has not the hereditary right to the crown, and there being no hope that he who has it can be restored, have grown cold and indifferent upon the subject of loyalty, and have no warm attachment to any King. They would not, therefore, risk any thing to restore the exiled family. They would not give twenty shillings a piece to bring it about. But if a mere vote could do it, there would be twenty to one; at least, there would be a very great majority of voices for it. For, sir, you are to consider, that all those who think a King has a right to his crown, as a man has to his estate, which is the just opinion, would be for restoring the King who certainly has the hereditary right, could he be trusted with it; in which there would be no danger now, when laws and every thing else are so much advanced: and every King will govern by the laws. And you must also consider, sir, that there is nothing on the other side to oppose to this; for it is not alleged by any one that the present family has any inherent right: so that the Whigs could not have a contest between two rights."

Dr. Taylor admitted, that if the question as to hereditary right were to be tried by a poll of the people of England, to be sure the abstract doctrine would be given in favour of the family of Stuart; but he said, the conduct of that family, which occasioned their expulsion, was so fresh in the minds of the people,

1 Dr. Taylor was very ready to make this admission, because the party with which he was connected was not in power. There was then some truth in it, owing to the pertinacity of factious clamour. Had he lived till now, it would have been impossible for him to deny that his Majesty possesses the warmest affection of his people.

that they would not vote for a restoration. Dr. Johnson, I think, was contented with the admission as to the hereditary right, leaving the original point in dispute, *viz.* what the people upon the whole would do, taking in right and affection; for he said, people were afraid of a change, even though they think it right. Dr. Taylor said something of the slight foundation of the hereditary right of the house of Stuart. "Sir (said Johnson), the house of Stuart succeeded to the full right of both the houses of York and Lancaster, whose common source had the undisputed right. A right to a throne is like a right to any thing else. Possession is sufficient, where no better right can be shewn. This was the case with the Royal Family of England, as it is now with the King of France: for as to the first beginning of the right we are in the dark."

Thursday, September 18. Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said, it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well (said I), for it is Dr. Johnson's birth-day." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birth-day. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly) "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next day."

Some ladies, who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birth-day, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally, by wishing him joy. I know not why he disliked having his birth-day mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread.

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed

by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir (said Johnson), this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English Poets who had published a volume of poems. Johnson told me "that a Mr. Coxeter,[1] whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this; having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known; but that upon his death Tom Osborne bought them, and they were dispersed, which he thought a pity, as it was curious to see any series complete; and in every volume of poems something good may be found."

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late. "He puts (said he) a very common thing in a strange dress till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it." BOSWELL. "That is owing to his being so much versant in old English poetry." JOHNSON. "What is that to the purpose, sir? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, sir, ——— has taken to an odd mode. For example; he'd write thus:

'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray.'

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1 [Thomas Coxeter, Esq. who had also made a large collection of old plays, and from whose manuscript notes the Lives of the English Poets, by Shiels and Cibber, were principally compiled, as should have been mentioned in a former page. See p. 223 and 224 of this volume. Mr. Coxeter was bred at Trinity College, Oxford, and died in London, April 17, 1747, in his fifty-ninth year. A particular account of him may be found in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for 1781, p. 173. M.]

Gray evening is common enough; but *evening gray* he'd think fine.—Stay;—we'll make out the stanza

‘ Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray:
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss? and which the way?’ ”

Boswell. “ But why smite his bosom, sir?” Johnson. “ Why to shew he was in earnest,” (smiling).—He at an after period added the following stanza:

“ Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
—Scarce repress'd the starting tear;—
When the smiling sage reply'd—
—Come, my lad, and drink some beer.”[1]

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the first three lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque

1 As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the progress of this little composition, I shall insert it from my notes. “ When Dr. Johnson and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre tavern, May 9, 1778, he said ‘ *Where* is bliss,’ would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza, but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It was somewhat as follows; the last line I am sure I remember:

‘ While I thus cried,
‘ seer,
‘ The hoary reply'd,
Come, my lad, and drink some beer.’

“ In spring, 1779, when in better humour, he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion, which was changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line, and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it.”

surprise on gloomy sentimental inquirers. And, perhaps, the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being:—"Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking: take a cup, and be merry."

END OF VOL. III.

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